

AN
EXPOSITION
WITH
Practical Observations
CONTINUED UPON
The **Thirty-fifth**, **Thirty-sixth**, and
Thirty-seventh Chapters of the Book
OF
J O B:

Being the Substance of Thirty-five LECTURES.

By JOSEPH CARYL, Minister of the Gospel.

ROM. II. 33.

O the depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgements, and his Ways past finding out!

L O N D O N,

Printed by M. Simmons, and are to be sold at her house in
Aldersgate-street, the next door to the Golden Lyon.

1664.



TO THE
Christian Reader,

TO
Those Especially of this CITY
who have been

THE
PROMOTERS

Of this WORK

SIRS,



Having, in the Prefatory
Epistle to the former part
set forth the state of these
three Chapters here pre-
sented and expounded, to-
gether with the general
scope of Elihu (the speak-
er) in them; be pleased
to look back thither for some help towards your
satisfaction in those points. All that I shall
entertain you with in this Address, is only

To the Christian Reader.

to tell you, that, as I have now, through the good hand of God with me, finished my promised Commentary upon the whole Discourse of Elihu with Job, divided into a Preface and four distinct Speeches, contained and continued in six entire Chapters; so, I purpose, through the same assistance, to proceed (with convenient speed) in drawing up and sending out (in one Volume more) my slender apprehensions and meditations upon the remaining five Chapters of this Book: In which it will appear, how (when Elihu (doubtless with good success) had acted the part of a wise and learned Moderator, in that grand Controversie of Providence between Job and his three Friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, and had done both with him and them, it will appear, I say, how) God himself was pleased to come forth and undertake the matter in difference, giving, as the Supreme Moderator of that Noble Disputation, an unerring and an irrefragable Determination of it, to the full conviction, and in the issue, to the full consolation of Job, as also to the high content of of all that heard it, even of his three Friends; who, though they were severely reproved and censured by God, as having over-severely re-
pro-

To the Christian Reader.

proved and censured Job, yet he graciously directed them a way to make their attonement, and was not only reconciled unto them himself, but reconciled them to his servant Job; winding all up in Peace and Love, in mutual rejoycings and embracings. Now the God of Peace, Truth and Love, lead us all into the love of Truth and Peace, and teach us to profit alwayes by what hath at any time been written (according to Truth) upon those things, which himself afore-time caused to be written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. That, what is here written may be useful to all, especially to those who are (as Job was) in a state of suffering, till they come to be (as Job is) past all sufferings, is the hearts desire and prayer of,

S I R S,

September 7th

1 6 6 4.

Your affectionate

Friend to serve you,

JOSEPH CARYL.

AN
EXPOSITION
 WITH
 Practical Observations
 UPON
 The Thirty-fifth, Thirty-sixth, and Thirty-
 seventh Chapters of the Book of
JOB.

JOB, Chap. 35. Vers. 1, 2, 3.

1. *Elihu spake moreover, and said,*
2. *Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than Gods?*
3. *For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee, and, What profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?*



His Chapter containeth the third Oration, Speech, or Address, which *Elihu* made to *Job*; in which he giveth answer to, confutes, and reproves, three assertions, or complaints, we may call them complaining assertions, with which he chargeth *Job*.

The First is laid down in the second and third verses; *Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, my righteousness is more than Gods? For thou saidst, What advantage will it*

B

be?

be? &c. The answer of *Elihu* to this both complaining and (as proposed) proud assertion, is found in the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th verses of this Chapter.

The Second uncomely complaint is charged on *Job* at the 9th verse; *By reason of the multitude of oppressions, they make the oppressed to cry: they cry out by reason of the arme of the mighty.* To this *Elihu* gives answer in the 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th verses.

The Third is exprest in the former part of the 14th verse; *Although thou sayest, thou shalt not see him.* To this *Elihu* begins to make answer in the latter part of the same verse, and continueth his answer to the end of the Chapter; *Yet judgement is before him, therefore trust thou in him, &c.* These are the general Parts of the whole Chapter. I shall now proceed to the explication of particulars.

Vers. 1. *Elihu spake moreover, and said.*

Who this *Elihu* was, I have shewed heretofore, as also the spirit and temper of the man; and it may well be said here, *Moreover, he said*; for we have already heard many of his sayings in the 32^d, 33^d, and 34th Chapters of this Book.

This first verse is a connecting Preface to that which followeth; for when *Elihu* had given *Job* liberty of speech, or of answering for himself, at the latter end of the former Chapter, and had, as we may suppose, paused a while, expecting what answer *Job* would make, he perceiving that *Job* either had nothing to offer, or would offer no more, began again; as if the Author of this Book had said, when *Elihu* saw that *Job* would not reply, or had nothing more to say for his own vindication, he let him understand, that he had more to say for his conviction.

For *Elihu* spake moreover, and said.

And he said many things, and those very sharp things, his words were indeed as goads, and as nails, yea as swords, and spears, in the heart of *Job*; he objected against him such things, as were in the matter very bad, and such for the manner, as a godly, yea an ingenious man, ought not only to be ashamed of, but to abhorre: And thus he undertakes him,

Vers. 2.

Verſ. 2. *Thinkeſt thou this to be right, that thou ſaiſt, my righteouſneſs is more than Gods?*

In this verſe *Elihu* enters his renewed ſuit againſt *Job*, or here he propoſeth what he had to charge *Job* with; *Thinkeſt thou this to be right?* And in the next or third verſe, he endeavours to make good this charge, or to prove that *Job* had ſaid ſo; *for thou haſt ſaid, &c.* As if he had ſaid, I will prove it to thy face, that thou haſt ſaid, *My righteouſneſs is more than Gods*; for thou haſt ſaid, *What advantage will it be unto thee, and what profit ſhall I have, if I be cleaſed from my ſin?* So then in the ſecond verſe you have the charge, and in the third the proof of the charge.

Thinkeſt thou this to be right?

The word which we render to *think*, notes more than a bare thinking, even the deviſing, or curious contriving of a matter in the brain; haſt thou formed this in thy Imagination, and concluded it in thy Underſtanding for-right, for ſound, and whoſome Doctrine, for a very truth? There may be a threefold expoſition of theſe words:

חשב
An hoc cogi-
taſti in juſ.
Heb:

Fiſt, As an appeal to *Jobs* own breaſt; *Thinkeſt thou this to be right?* let me aſk thee the queſtion, Haſt thou ſaid well in this? doſt thou believe thou haſt? let thy Conſcience judge, and make answer. I doubt not but thou wilt be ſelf-condemned: And indeed no guilty perſon can be abſolved, himſelf (if himſelf) being judge.

Secondly, We may look upon the words, not only as an appeal, but as a reproof, or obſurgation; *Thinkeſt thou this to be right?* What man in his right mind would think ſo! thou toldeſt thy wife in the ſecond Chapter, *Thou ſpeakeſt like one of the fooliſh women*; and may it not now be told thee, *Thou ſpeakeſt like one of the fooliſh men*? Would any man in his wits utter a word of this import, a word of ſo groſs a favour, of ſo dangerous a reflection upon the Juſtice of God, or ſo much as intimate himſelf by any the remoteſt conſequences, more juſt, more righteous than God? why hath ſuch a word dropt from thy mouth? Thus he chides, checks, and reproveth him.

Thirdly, Theſe words may have the ſenſe of a denying queſtion; *Thinkeſt thou this to be right?* Surely *Job* thou doſt not think

think this to be right, I cannot believe that thou thinkest this to be right, thou art not surely so far left of Reason, and of Grace, as to think this to be right. This sense gives some allay to, or abatement of the former; surely thou dost not think so, though thou hast spoken so; though thy words may have this meaning, yet I hope this is not thy meaning; I am unwilling to take up thy opinion from thy expression; *Thinkest thou this to be right?* From the first Exposition,

Note;

It is a strong way of conviction, to put or refer a matter to his Judgement and Conscience, against whom we make opposition.

Thinkest thou this to be right? I refer it to thy own Conscience, whether this be right yea or no; and thus the Scripture speaks often. When God would stop the mouth from all contradiction, and not leave opposers a word to say, he leaves it upon them to say all. Moses intending to prove that none could prevail against Israel, unless (God provoked by sin) delivered Israel up into their hands, gives this demonstration of it (*Deut. 32. 31.*) *Their Rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being Judges;* I refer this to our enemies opinion, whether the Dunghil gods, the Idols whom they serve and trust to, be like *Jehovah*, the living God, whom we have (and ought) to serve and trust to. You that are our enemies, do you think your Rock is like our Rock? I know you do not. The Apostles, *Peter*, and *John*, referred it back to the judgment of their Judges, whether it were fit for them, to obey their commands, yea or no, when they called them, and charged them to preach no more in that name, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, (*Acts 4. 19.*) *Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* We have received a command from God to preach; *Go teach all Nations* (*Math. 28. 19.*) and we have received a command from you not to preach; now we leave it with you, whether it be fit for us to obey God or you. So the Apostle having admonished the *Corinthians* to flee from Idolatry, presently adds (*1 Cor. 10. 14, 15.*) *I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say;* I have given you the rule, and I leave it to your consideration, what's best and safest for you to do. *I speak as to wise men*, that's a holy insinuation; As if he had said, *I know you are wise men, men of understanding, and therefore I do not so much command you to obey what I say, as to judge what I say;*

I am much perswaded you cannot judge otherwise in this thing than I do; There is so much truth and reason in what I say, that you cannot but say so too. The same Apostle speaks again in a like forme about womens praying uncovered; Judge in your selves, is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered (1 Cor. 11. 13.) As if he had said, I do not stand wholly to my own judgement in this case of conscience, I dare refer it to you, and stand to yours. Thus in many things we may appeal unto the Consciences of those we deal with; & do doubt the Conscience is often satisfied while the Will stands out: Men of much understanding will dispute, when Conscience hath nothing to say; Yea some will for their own ends argue that to be right, which (in their Consciences) they do not think to be so. Thinkest thou this to be right? Thou hast said it, but dost thou think it? I trow not.

Observe, Secondly.

There is a Light within us that will shew us what's amiss, or not right.

Elihu doth not direct Job immediately to the Word, (though that's the authoritative and authentick Rule) but to his heart; thou hast a Light in thy self, whereby thou mayest see that this is not right. Thus the Apostle, (1 Cor. 11. 14, 15.) Doth not even Nature it self teach you, that if a man have long haire, it is a shame unto him? but if a woman have long haire, it is a glory to her, for her haire is given her for a covering. The Light which every man hath in him will shew this. Again, the Apostle (Rom. 2. 14, 15.) proveth that the old Gentiles had a light of Nature in them, which shewed them many things amiss. Thus he argueth; For when the Gentiles that have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law; (they do them by Nature, that is, by the Light of Nature, which shews them to do these things, that is, it sheweth them that they ought to be done, and they do them, as to the outward action, by that Light;) these having not the Law (that is, the written Word, published to them in that formality, which the people of God have, these having not the Law) are a Law unto themselves; which shew the work of the Law written in their hearts, their Conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another. This Light shewed those Gentiles so far what to do according to the Law, as left them with-
out

out excuse, for not doing what it shewed. Gospel Mysteries and matters of Faith are purely of Divine Revelation, but what the moral Law commands or forbids, the light of Nature leads us to do and to forbear.

There is a generation of people grown up and spreading amongst us, who cry up *the light within them*, with neglect of, if not in opposition to the Word written and preached to them. These make a very ill use of this notion; For whoeuer bids us look to the light within us, to draw us off from the Word or light without us, erre greatly, and may quickly draw us into the greatest errors both in Faith and Practise. 'Tis dangerous to go or act against the light within us, yet if we go or act alwayes by that light alone, we shall be in darkness before we are aware. Natural light without Scripture-light, proves a false light, and may quickly lead us out of the way, and besides our duty. Therefore the Prophet, when any should say, *Seek unto them that have familiar Spirits, &c.* doth not say, look to the light within you for resolution, whether ye should hearken to such or no, but *to the Law, and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,* (Isa. 8. 20.) If that which is called light within us, speak not according to the light of the Law and Testimony without us, there is no true light (or as the Margin hath it) *no morning in us*; the Day-starre hath not risen in such hearts, nor do they speak like children of the light. Take heed of striking and so splitting against that Rock; yet certainly there is a light within us that must not be resisted. The Apostle reports that as the sin of the old Gentiles (*Rom. 1. 28.*) *They did not like to retain God in their knowledge*; they had a light of God by nature, God was in their knowledge, but they liked not to think of God, but rather thought of the world, and of any vanity, than of God, rather of the creature, than of the Creator; for this cause God gave them up to a *reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient*. They who obey not, who answer not the light of Nature in doing good, shall be left to the doing of those evils which are against the light of Nature. Such were those things which the Apostle calls (by a modest word) *not convenient*, or not fitting that duty and decorum, which man as man should carefully and religiously observe. By which negative expression, *Not convenient*, he positively intends the vilest evils and debaucheries of Nature, not to be named.

And

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And if God were so wroth with the *Gentiles* for not answering the common Light of Nature, no marvel if he spake so dreadfully against those that refuse and oppose the Light of the most glorious Gospel (*John 3. 19.*) *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.* Not to answer the Light of Conscience within us rightly informed, much more not to obey the Light of the Gospel without us, leaves us under condemnation. The Light within man will shew him very much what he ought to do, and judge him for not doing it. *Thinkest thou this to be right?* Doth the Principle planted in thee comply with this Position?

But what was it that *Elihu* puts the Question about? You have it in the close of the verse;

That thou saidst, My righteousness is more than Gods;

Or according to the strictnesse of the Hebrew, *My righteousness is before Gods.* The Preposition here used is often taken comparatively, and hath the same signification with that (*Math. 11. 19.*) where Christ saith (as we translate) *Wisdom is justified of her Children;* that is, Christ, or the Doctrine of the Gospel, the Divine Light that shines there, is justified, that is approved and declared just, by all who are her Children indeed, *born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* This is a good and profitable sence. Though strangers do not, will not justify Wisdom, yet her Children do and will. Nevertheless that comparative translation, and reading, which some contend for, carrieth in it a clear truth also, and serves to illustrate this Text in *Job*, now under-hand. *Wisdom is justified more than her children, or rather than her children, or before her children.* That is, more, rather, and before the Scribes and Pharisees, who pretended highly, that they were the children, yea the chief, if not the only children of Wisdom; and while they made this boast, they really resisted and opposed Jesus Christ, who is wisdom, and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom: And therefore how much soever the Scribes and Pharisees flattered themselves in their own opinion, or were applauded, and preferred by others, as children of wisdom, or as very wise men; yet Jesus Christ the true Wisdom, was justified by God, and all good men, more than they, or before, yea infinitely before them; he was justified fully, but they

not

not at all. Such a negative sence Christ intends, in that comparative determination, between the Publican and the Pharisee (Luke 18. 14.) *I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.* That is, the Publican went home justified rather, or righteous rather, or more righteous than the Pharisee; the proud Pharisee, not being at all justified, nor righteous, but in his own eyes. Some Comparatives imply a perfect Negative to the opposite party, others only a partial. Such a comparative sence *Elihu* intimates in *Jobs* assertion of his righteousness. *Thou saidst, my righteousness is more than Gods;* Or I am to be justified rather than God.

But some may say, where spake *Job* this? where's the Chapter and Verse? did *Job*, or could *Job* overshoot himself to such a height of blasphemy?

I answer,

First, Some indeed charge *Elihu* deeply, as if he had feigned all these things against *Job*, or formed them up in his own Imagination, rather than grounded them upon any of his assertions; but we need not thus wound *Elihu*, to get a salve for *Jobs* sore.

Therefore Secondly, I answer, that although *Job* had not spoken this in so many words, or syllabically, yet he had spoken that from which *Elihu* might gather such a sence, or of which he might make such an interpretation. And therefore he seems to say at the third verse, If thou thinkest this a falsehood, or too hard a charge, and shouldst deny that thou hast said, *My righteousness is more than Gods;* I'll tell thee what thou hast said, which hath given me ground (I think just and sufficient ground) for this accusation: Thou hast said, *What advantage will it be unto me? and what profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?* And is not this to make thy righteousness more than Gods?

But what righteousness is here meant?

I answer, There is a twofold righteousness.

First, There is the righteousness of our persons, which is either imputed in justification, or imparted in sanctification, (as hath been shewed upon some other passages of *Elihu's* discourse with *Job*) This is the righteousness of our persons; as justified we are righteous, as sanctified we are also righteous. Now when *Elihu* chargeth *Job* to say that his righteousness was more than Gods, we are not to understand it as if he had said, his personal righteousness,

ness, in either notion, was more than Gods; for that righteousness which is imputed to our persons, is indeed the righteousness of God, (Rom. 10. 3.) but 'tis not a righteousness more than Gods. And as for that righteousness planted in our persons, how imperfect and mixt with corruption is that, at best, in this life? And therefore had Job spoken any such words, or had harboured such a thought, it had been blasphemy at the highest rate; and (as one expresseth it well) *If Job had spoken these horrible blasphemies, though extorted from him by utmost extremity, and in the greatest anguish of his spirit, surely Satan had got the day, and triumphed as Victor in this great conflict, not Job.* Should the most righteous man on Earth, or Angel in Heaven, say in strict sence, *My righteousness is more than Gods*, this saying were a charging of God with unrighteousness, yea (which Satan promised himself, and told God Job would do, if tryed to the utmost) a cursing of God to his face. But as Job abhorred to speak irreverently (though he sometimes spake passionately) of God, so, that he utterly disclaimed such thoughts of his own righteousness, hath appeared fully by his frequent protestations against all dependance upon, and trust in any self-righteousness or perfection, in divers passages of this Book.

Secondly, There is a righteousness of our Cause, or of the special matter in controversy: In which sence (I conceive) *Judab* said of *Tamar*, (Gen. 38. 26.) *She hath been more righteous than I.* That is, She hath carried this business better, and more according to right. And thus we may understand *Elihu* charging Job for saying, *My righteousness is more than Gods*; that is, my Cause is more righteous than his; and to say that (which is the most moderate sence) was too great a boldness for any creature, yea a blasphemy against the Creator. Shall man presume to say that God doth not carry things righteously with him, or that there is no reason why God should deal so or so with him? But did Job ever affirm his Cause more righteous than Gods? I answer, not categorically, or directly; But *Elihu* hearing Job make so many complaints, might suppose he thought there was no reason why God should deal with him as he had done, and then he had been more righteous in his Cause than God.

The *Septuagint* read it without any comparison at all, which makes the meaning much more easie; they say not, *My righteousness*

Si hec horrenda blasphemia fuisset ab eo extorta, Satan certe, non autem Jobus, in hoc certamine victoriam obtinisset. Bee.

Iustus sum ante conspectum Domini. Sept.

ousness is more than Gods; but, I shall be found righteous before God, or in the sight of God. This Job had said, and therefore made so many appeals to God. *I am just before God*, that is, *My cause will be found right and just in the sight of God*. And as Job had said this often equivalently, so once in terms, (Chap. 23. 10.) *When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold*, or appear innocent before God; which he spake especially with an eye to those heavy accusations which his Friends brought against him, and laid upon him: And even for this Job might well be condemned of rashness by Elihu, who aimed at the throwing down of all self-righteousness, at the stopping of every mouth, at the eclipsing of all humane glory, in the presence, and before the brightness of the Most Glorious, High and Holy God.

*Propositiō illa
Mōi vērū pō-
tēst a vcl ab,
in hunc sensum
iustus sum a
Deo, vcl iusti-
ficabo causam
meam apud De-
um. Cajet.*

So then, even, this other more favourable reading, which speaketh not comparatively, but positively, *I am just before God*, that is, I shall be justified by God, or I doubt not but I shall be acquitted, and found right before God, this cannot every way be justified: It was Jobs fault and failing, that he was so confident God would not (he was farre from saying God could not) find fault with him. We may see (if we have spiritual eyes, or eyes enlightened by the Spirit, so many faults in our best services, as may make us ashamed to own them, rather than to boast of them before men, much more to bear up our selves before God upon them: For (as Eliphaz told Job in the 4th Chapter) *God chargeth his Angels with folly*, and the best of his Saints are unclean before him; therefore that was too much for Job to say of himself, though that's the easiest and most charitable Interpretation of what he said, when he said (as the Septuagint render) *I shall be found righteous before God, or in the sight of God*.

Our Translation is very hard, hardest of all, *Thou hast said, my righteousness is more than Gods*; yet this Elihu might gather up consequentially from what he spake in the 19th Chapter, vers. 6, 7. *Behold I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard, I cry aloud, but there is no judgement*. As also from the passage, Chap. 23d vers. 2d. *Even to day is my complaint bitter, my stroke is heavier than my groaning*. In both places Job speaks as if God had not dealt rightly with him, as if God had been over-severe in afflicting him, or as if his complainings were short of his sufferings. In both or either of which, Job exceeds the bounds both of truth and

and duty; such extravagant expressions, have no apology but his pain, nor can any thing be an Advocate for him, but this, That Satan who was his Tempter, was also his Tormenter, and held him so long upon the Rack, that he uttered (as himself confessed, Chap. 42. 3.) *that which he understood not*, yea words by which Elihu understood that he said in effect, *My righteousness is more than Gods.*

Note hence, first, *There is no thought of man further from right, than to think there is any unrighteousness in the dealings of God with man.*

Man can hardly do any thing that is just, and it is impossible God should do any thing that is unjust. Let God do what he will, it is right, and he is righteous in doing it: Yea, whatsoever evil God doth to a *Job*, to any of his good people, he is good to them in doing it (*Psal. 73. 1.*) *Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart, or clean of heart.* Not only is God Righteous and Just, but Good and Gracious in what he doth: though his dispensations are often very sad, yet they are never unequal; and as the worst of men shall at last acknowledge that he is just; so the best of men, a *Job*, a *David*, shall find and see at last with joy and thanksgivings, that God hath been good, yea best to them (considering their state) in his sorest and severest dealings: For *all the paths of the Lord* (as well hard as soft, as well those that are set with Briers and Thorns, as those that are set with Roses) *are mercy and truth*, (mercy as much as truth) *unto such as keep his Covenant, and his Testimonies*, *Psal. 25. 10.* He that shews mercy cannot but shew righteousness to his in all his ways. *As he that doth righteousness, is righteous*, (*1 John 3. 7.*) so he that is righteousness, cannot but do righteous things. *God is not only righteous, but righteousness*; he is essentially righteous, his righteousness is himself. A mans being, and his righteousness are two things. The man may subsist without righteousness (all men by nature, and while nothing but nature, though much sublimated and refined, if not converted, are unrighteous) but it is as impossible for God not to be righteous, as not to be. How can he who is righteous, yea righteousness it self, but do righteous things in all he doth, in every cause, in every proceeding, whether with Persons, Families, or Nations? Is it not then a most

unrighteous thing to think or say God hath, or can do any unrighteous thing?

Secondly Note,

He that complains that God deals over-severely with him, or otherwise than is fit, or otherwise than he hath deserved, makes himself as to his Cause, more righteous than God.

If we say a man deals otherwise with us then we have deserved at his hands, we judge him, as to that action, uneven and unjust in his dealings. Surely then, if we think or speak hardly of the hardest wayes of God, we speak and think hardly of God himself. We cannot think well of God, unlesse we say all that he doth is well done. A thought, that there is but one twig in our rod more than is meet, or fit, or more than is good for us, or to think it abides one minute longer upon our backs, than is meet, or fit, or good for us, is to say, *Our righteousness is more than Gods*; yea, 'tis to say, *Our wisdom is more than Gods, and our mercies are more than the mercies of God.* Therefore take heed of such thoughts. Though we cannot see the righteousness of God in his works, yet we must say his works are righteous. It can never be right, not only to say, *Our righteousness is more than Gods*, but so much as to say, *Our righteousness is any thing to Gods.*

Thirdly Note,

What we speak rashly, may at any time be prest upon us hardly, and is sometimes very uncharitably.

It is very usual with those who accuse, or oppose others, to take things doubtful for certainties, their own conjectures for the assertions of their adversarie, and every thing which hath a likeness to an errour, to be errour. *Elihu* might have spoken more favourably to *Job*, he might have construed his sayings more candidly than he did: Had he taken *Jobs* words with a grain of Salt (as we speak) he needed not to have put so much Gall and Wormwood into his own: Had he not interpreted *Jobs* complaints strictly, according to the sound, or letter, but considered them with his scope, his aime, and purpose in speaking so, together with the extreame pain of his body, and anguish of his soul, when he spake so, he had never given him such cutting answers.

But

*in disputando
cavendum, ne
ex dictis adver-
sarii per falsam
consequentiam
absurda dedu-
cantur, quibus
illum grave-
mus, qua in re
hic peccavit
Elihu. Pisc.*

But God justly, and in much wisdom, sharpened the spirit of *Elihu*, to speak cutting words to *Job*, that *Job* feeling the smart, might be made sensible of his error, and at last be brought low, and broken under his hand. Milde words may skin a sore before 'tis searcht to the bottom, and so not only retard the Cure, but endanger the Patient. The holy Apostle fore-seeing the murmurings, quarrels and disputes which flesh and blood would make about Election or Predestination, doth not go about so much to answer them by Reason, as to repress them by a strong Reproof, and vehement Objurgation, (*Rom. 9.20.*) *Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God! shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? hath not the Potter power over the Clay? &c.* Now as about that unfearchable depth of eternal Election, so about present dreadful dispensations, and providences, our undue reasonings and tumultuating thoughts of heart, concerning God, breaking our bounds, and forgetting with whom we have to do, or who hath to do with us, call for and deserve sharpest reproofs; *Who are you that reply against God! Who are you that think this to be right which you do, or any thing wrong which God doth? Who are you, that you should presume to say (so much as by inference) that your righteousness is more than Gods, or, that it is any thing compared with the righteousness of God!*

Thou hast said, my righteousness is more than Gods.

What *Job* had said, which might give colour for this accusation, hath been touched before, in the mention of those Speeches, or Passages, forced from him by the greatnesse of his suffering. But *Elihu* gives it us yet more expressly in the next verse.

Vers. 3. *For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee, and what profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?*

As if he had said, O *Job*, If thou shouldest ask me, when or where thou hast said, *My righteousness is more than Gods?* or how can I prove that thou hast said so? I may soon answer thee, and easily prove it thus, thou hast said, *What advantage will it be unto thee?* &c. Thou hast spoken as if no good were to be gotten by turning from evill; or that thou sufferest evil, being thy self free, at least turned from doing evil; and that therefore it availeth thee

thee no more that thou art righteous, than if thou wert the greatest sinner in the world. So thou hast said, and in saying so, thou hast said what I have charged thee with.

But here the Question may arise again, as much about the Proof, as about the Charge. When did Job say, *What advantage will it be unto me? and what profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?*

I answer, as he said not the former words contained in the Charge directly, they were only a collection raised consequentially by *Elihu*, so he said not these words which are the proof of the Charge expressly, but by consequences.

For the clearing of this, we must distinguish of what is meant by profit and advantage, when *Elihu* saith, *Thou saidst, What advantage shall it be unto thee, and what profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?* This advantage and profit may be considered,

First, As to his eternal well-being and salvation; Secondly, as to his present ease and consolation. We are not to understand it as if *Elihu* accused Job for saying, That to be cleansed from his sin, would be no advantage, no profit as to his eternal estate; that had been impious, and an Atheistical Speech, crossing the whole current of Scripture, and overthrowing the very foundation of godlinesse. *Take away eternal reward and punishment, and where's Religion? where's either the love or fear of God?* His meaning then is, that Job had said, it would be no profit, no boot to him for the present, or as to his then condition, if he were cleansed from his sin. This *Elihu* might gather from those two places (Chap. 9: 22, 23.) *This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked. If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the tryal of the innocent.* As if *Elihu* had said, Thou canst not avoid this proof of my first Charge; for he that saith, *God destroyeth the perfect and the wicked*, that is, the perfect as well as the wicked, saith also in effect, *What profit is it, that I am cleansed from my sin?* But thou hast said the former, therefore the latter also. Again thou hast said (Chap. 10: 15.) *If I be wicked, wo unto me, and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head. I am full of confusion, therefore see thou mine affliction; weigh thy words, Thou hast said, Wo to me, if I be wicked; and if I be righteous, (it will not be much better with me) I will not, I dare not lift up my head, my confusion is so great. How great soever my innocency*

nocency is, I have little comfort, or 'tis much-what alike with me, whether I be righteous, or wicked. In these places, and by these speeches *Job* seems to put little or no difference between the dealings of God with the wicked and the righteous. Once more. Those words (*Chap. 9. 28, 29, 30.*) are of a like import, *I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent. If I be wicked, why then labour I in vaine? if I wash my self with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own cloaths shall abhorre me.* Saying this, thou hast said, how innocent soever I am, I shall not be dealt with as an innocent; if I make my self never so clean, God will throw me into the ditch, that is, into affliction. From these speeches *Elihu* might charge *Job* with saying, *What profit is it* (as to my temporal good) *that I am cleansed from spiritual evil, my sin?* As for his eternal estate, that's not the matter controverted in this book. The summe of all amounts to this, If I am cleansed from my sin, I may be as great a sufferer and as hardly dealt with in this world, as if I were altogether unclean. And hence it might be inferred, Surely *Job* was more righteous than God, because while he laboured to please God as becometh his people and good servants to do, God was pleased (instead of rewarding him, as he had done many, and promised all who do so) to afflict him, as he useth to do and hath threatned to do to the worst of evil men, the wicked. Thus thou hast said, *What advantage, &c.*

The word here rendred *advantage*, signifieth gain any way, or any thing that is commodious and gainful to us; thou hast said, *What advantage will it be unto thee?* Thus he brings in *Job* putting the question to himself, what advantage should he get to himself in this life by living a religious or a holy life? As if he had said, Doubtless 'tis concluded in thy breast, thou shalt get none; And to strengthen this thy unbelief, at least to shew that thy unbelief in this poynt is very strong, thou hast said the same thing in another dresse of words a second time; For I have heard thee saying thus also:

*prodit
contulit, utilis
commodum suum.*

What profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?

Job was taxed for a saying of the same scandalous sense (*Chap. 34. 9.*) *He hath said, it profiteth a man nothing, that he should delight himself with God.* There *Elihu* accuseth him for affirming in

a third person, it profiteth a man nothing; and here for questioning in his own person;

What profit shall I have?

מה אשיל
א רסדו
profuit, utili-
tatem annuit;
hinc Belial
inutilis.

Some derive the word *Belial* from this root, signifying an unprofitable one, or an unthrife, a man that doth no good, either to himself, or others; *What profit shall I have?* what shall I get? All the good I shall get I may put in my eye, and see never the worse: In a word, I shall not mend my condition, if I mend my conversation; so it followeth;

If I be cleansed from my sin.

The words, *If I be cleansed*, are not exprest in the Hebrew Text, but are clearly implied and understood; For *Job* cannot be supposed to ask this question; *What profit shall I get by, or from my sin?* that question were nothing to the present purpose or disputation. And therefore though all Interpreters do not make this supplement, yet all agree, that a supplement is to be made: Most concur in this, *What profit shall I have, if I depart from, or forsake my sin?* We say, *If I be cleansed from my sin?* As if these were *Job's* thoughts, this his saying, *Let me keep my sin, or not keep my sin; I see I am like to suffer. I shall still be kept under the rod.* That's the plain sense of the words; *Elihu chargeth Job with complaining of God, that it would be no advantage to him, as to the ease of himself from any outward affliction and calamity, how much soever he forsook or were cleansed from his sin.* There are two

Nam dixisti,
quid profutura
(sc: justitia
tua) sit tibi
(item) quid
proficiam: ex
ea) magis
quam ex pec-
cato meo Pise.
Rab: Selom:

Siroges, quid
profuturum sit
tibi, dicens, quid
proficerem a
supplicia mea.
Jun:

other readings of this verse, which I shall only name, and then give two or three Notes from our own.

First, Thus; *Thou hast said, What profit shall I have more by it (that is, by my righteousness) than by my sins:* As if his meaning were (which is a very grosse one) *What good shall I get by well-doing more than by ill-doing?* One of the Rabbins takes in strongly with this comparative exposition, between those remote moral extremes good and evil, as to his case: But I dare not joyn either with the one or other in this interpretation.

A second gives it thus; *If thou demandest what may it profit thee, saying, What good shall I get by further punishment or suffering?*

It hath been said before, that those words, *If I be cleansed*, are not.

or found expreſſly in the Hebrew Text; And the word in our Tranſlation rendred *ſin*, ſignifieth alſo *puniſhment* or *ſuffering*, which is the fruit or effect of ſin. So that according to this reading, *Elihu* in theſe words prevents an objection, which *Job* might take occaſion to make from what he had ſaid, or wiſhed rather, at the 36th verſe of the former Chapter. *My deſire is that Job may be tryed unto the end*; That is, further afflicted, or afflicted to the utmoſt. Againſt this deſire of *Elihu*, *Job* is by him ſuppoſed making his exception, or objection, in this verſe; As if he had ſaid, Why doeſt thou, or what reaſon haſt thou to deſire that I ſhould be yet again tryed by affliction? What, I pray, would that profit me, if I were afflicted yet more and more? Can the ſuffering of evil do me good, or make me better? To this objection, *Elihu* gives anſwer in the next verſe, and thoſe which follow to the ninth; and he doth it (as the Aſſerter of this Interpretation judgeth) by this Dilemma. Thy afflictions would profit either God or thy ſelf (ſeeing God doth nothing in vaine); but neither thy ſufferings, how grievous ſoever, nor thy doings, how righteous ſoever, can profit God, no more than thy ſins or evil doings can damage God; therefore it remains, that if God afflict thee further, it will be (if thou haſt a heart to improve it) for thy profit.

This reading, and the ſenſe ariſing from it, is much inſiſted on; but as the former is very harſh, ſo I conceive, this latter is very dark and intricate, and grounded upon the ſuppoſition of an objection very remote, or not eaſily to be ſuggeſted in this diſcourſe. And therefore to avoyd both my own and the readers unneceſſary trouble, I ſhall take the Text, as it ſtands in our Tranſlation, and offer ſomewhat for inſtruction from it.

How great ſinfulneſs there is in ſaying, *There is no profit in the wayes of God*, I have ſhewed at the 21th Chap. verſ. 11th, and Chap. 34th verſ. 9. So that referring the Reader thither, I ſhall here give only this Note.

It is very ſinful to ſay, we ſhall get no advantage by leaving ſin.

We may well put the Apoſtles queſtion (Rom. 6. 21.) to our ſelves, *What fruit have we in thoſe things whereof we are now aſhamed?* What benefit have we got by polluting our ſelves with ſin? But how vaine a queſtion is it to ſay, *What profit ſhall I have,*

D

if

if I be cleansed from my sin? Elihu chargeth Job with this; yet still remember, he refers not to his eternal, but temporal condition. And this was Asaphs or Davids temptation also, as to his temporal condition; even he, the one or the other, David or Asaph spake as much in expresse terms, as Job is here charged with, (*Psal. 73. 13.*) where complaining of the great tryalls and troubles he had been under, and of the prosperity of the wicked; Behold (saith he) these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world, they increase in riches. But how is it with me? Verily I have cleansed my heart in vaine, and washed my hands in innocency; for all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every moment. As if he had said; What have I got by my holiness, and forsaking of sin? what have I gained by my strictest walkings, and abstainings from the very appearance of evil? Have I not reason to conclude, in good earnest, that I have cleansed my heart and hands in vaine, seeing my sufferings are not lessened, though my sins are, seeing my punishments are renewed every morning, though I am every morning upon the renewal of my repentance? Thus spake the Psalmist in the day of his temptation; and doubtless, this day of his Temptation had been a day of temptation and provocation to the Lord, (like that of Israels in the Wilderness, *Psal. 95. 7.*) had not the Lord come in by his grace, and helped him to bite in his words at the very next verse; If I say, I will speak thus, (if I use such, not only uncomely, but wicked language as this, I have cleansed my heart and hands in vaine) Behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children. And when I thought to know this, it was too wonderful for me; that is, it was beyond my skill to reconcile these works, these providences of God towards me, with his word and promises; nor was I any whit less at a loss, how to reconcile the prosperity and flourishing condition of wicked men, with those terrible threatnings which the Lord in his Word every where thunders out against them. These cross and intricate dispensations puzzel'd me greatly, put my soul into a maze; nor could I spel their meaning, nor make out the sense of them, Until I went into the Sanctuary of God, then understood I their end; the woful Catastrophe, the miserable end of wicked men, their slippery standing, and their sudden falling, as both are described (*v. 18, 19, 20.*) Then also I understood the blessedness of a godly mans estate, both now and for ever, in having God his guide and his portion
(*v. 24.*)

(v. 24, 25, 26.) then I understood what profit and advantage comes by cleansing our selves from sin, though to the eye it appear not, yea though all appearances speak the contrary. To be cleansed from, or to remove sin is profitable and advantageous:

First, As to the removal of Judgement. **When we begin cleansing work, the Lord usually makes an end of afflicting work.**

For as one great end of sending affliction, is to cleanse us from sin, (*Isa. 27. 9.*) *By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit, to take away his sin;* to our being cleansed from sin is usually the end of our afflictions. When we are cleansed from sin, we are troubled no more, we smart no more: speak then, Is it no profit to be cleansed from sin, when so many, not only persons, but Nations have been ruin'd, because not cleansed from sin? God gave his own people cleanness of teeth, (*Amos 4. 6.*) that is, famine or want of bread, because of the uncleanness of their hearts, and lives; and is it no profit to be cleansed from sin, when for our sinfull uncleanneses God will cleanse us of all our comforts, even to a morsel of bread? 'Tis therefore a speech both false in it self, and highly dishonourable unto God, to say, I shall have no profit, for still I shall suffer, though I be cleansed from my sin; whereas first, there is more profit in being cleansed from sin, than in being delivered from sufferings; and, secondly, when once we are cleansed from sin, we are in the fairest way to be cleared from, and see an end of all our sufferings.

Secondly, The more we are cleansed from sin, the more communion we have with God, and the more peace from God. Is not this a great profit? a profit besides the eternal reward? a profit far better than any temporal reward? Will not communion with God satisfie us for the loss of friends, of estate, or health? Will not peace with God answer all the tribulations we can meet with in this world? If therefore being cleansed from sin, we have closer communion and sweeter peace with God, let no man say, *What profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?* And, although there should be no present profit, or advantage, though no visible, no nor spiritual income, as to present comfort, should redound to us in this world, by being cleansed from sin, yet remember, it is our profit, and our best profit to be cleansed from sin, to be emptied of sin, to mortifie sin, to destroy sin; if we should have no profit in hand by leaving sin, yet there is a profit promised, that infi-

nirely exceeds all the profits and pleasures which we can have or hope for by retaining our sin ; such profit and pleasure, as will abundantly recompence us for all the worldly losses we are at, and penitential sorrows which we pass thorow in keeping or cleansing our selves from sin. The Apostle rejoyced at the sorrow of the *Corinthians* (2 Cor. 7. 9.) But is it good to rejoyce at the sorrow of others ? should we not mourn with those that mourn ? 'tis true, we should ; yet 'tis good to rejoyce in that sorrow which doth others good ; such was the sorrow of those *Corinthians*. The Text is express ; Now (saith St Paul) I rejoyce not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance, for ye were made sorry after a godly manner (or according to God) that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. There is then no damage, no hurt by such sorrow ; But comes there any good, any profit by it ? yes, much every way ; for (as it followeth, v. 10.) godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of ; that is, greatly to be rejoyced in. What is matter of joy, if salvation be not ? True repentance for sin, is repentance to salvation. And is there not profit, is there not all profit in that ? As there is a Fountain opened (the blood of Christ) for sin and for uncleanness (Zech: 13. 1.) that is, for washing away the uncleanness of sin ; so there are abundance of blessings flowing from that Fountain, to all such as by the workings of Faith and Repentance wash and are clean.

Thus far of *Elihu's* first charge, and the proof of it, taken from *Jobs* own sayings. How he answers and refutes those sayings of *Job*, will appear in opening the next words.

JOB, Chap. 35. Vers. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

4. *I will answer thee, and thy Companions with thee.*

5. *Look unto the Heavens, and see, and behold the Clouds which are higher than thou.*

6. *If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplyed, what dost thou unto him?*

7. *If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?*

8. *Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man.*

THe former Context contained the Charge which *Elihu* brought against *Job*, that he should say, *His righteousness was more than Gods*, and that it would be no profit to him, if he were cleansed from his sin.

In the Context of these five Verses, *Elihu* gives answer to those (had *Job* positively and purposely said, or asserted them) blasphemous sayings, or assertions. And we have here

First, The promise or overture of an answer, at the 4th verse, *I will answer thee, and thy Companions with thee.*

Secondly, We have the answer it self laid down in the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th verses; which answer consists in three particulars.

First, That God cannot be hurt or endammag'd by our sin; at the 6th verse.

Secondly, That God can have no benefit or advantage by our righteousness; at the 7th verse.

Thirdly, That both *Job* himself, and other men like himselfe may, yea shall certainly have hurt and dammage by their sin, as also benefit or advantage by their righteousness, vers. 8th.

Thus *Elihu's* answer obviates *Job's* passionate question at the 3d verse, *what profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?* As if *Elihu* had said, *I know that neither thy sins can do any hurt to God, nor can thy righteousness do him any good; but thy sins may hurt*

hurt thee, and thy righteousness advantage thy self; therefore lay down such wicked and desperate thoughts as these, say not, *What profit will redound to me if I be cleared from my sin?* &c. That's his answer, according to our Translation. Other readings present us with other forms of answer; but I shall not stay upon them.

Vers. 4. *I will answer thee, and thy Companions with thee.*

Elihu makes overture of answering before he answers, and tells him he will, before he doth it; *I will answer thee, or I will return thee words.* Answering is the returning of words to words; yet not of empty words, but of words fill'd with Reason and Authority to resolve him that is doubting, or to convince him that is gain-saying. *I will answer thee,*

And thy Companions with thee.

I will speak that which shall not only take off thy Objections, but theirs also who are of thy mind, or joyn in Opinion with thee; *I will answer thee, and thy Companions with thee:* I will do both at once; when I have answered thee, they also will be answered; one answer will serve thee and them. One Line will mark and measure both Walls.

*Dns fidelis
duos parietes
dealbabo.*

Drus.

*סוֹחֵם Socius
amicus, fa-
miliaris qui
simul pascitur,
convivor.*

The word which we render *Companions*, signifies any Friends or Familiars, with whom we usually converse, with whom we eat, or who eat bread with us, (2 Sam. 13. 3.) (Prov. 17. 17.) We may take it either more strictly for a special intimate bosome friend, who is to a man as his own soul, as *Moses* speaks (Deut. 13. 6.) or for a friend at large, such as is called a Neighbour, (Exod. 20. 16.) Levit. 19. 18.

Yet the question may be, Whom doth *Elihu* mean by *Jobs* Companions, when he saith, *I will answer thee, and thy Companions with thee?*

Some by his *Companions* understand those who came to visit him in his affliction, and maintained that long Discourse with him, those three friends of whom we read (Chap. 2. 11.) *Eliphaz* the *Temanite*, *Bildad* the *Shuite*, and *Zophar* the *Naamathite*. The Septuagint conclude *Elihu* meant them only, for thus they render, *I will answer thee, and thy three friends.*

*Καὶ τοὺς τρεῖς
ἀνδράς αὐτοῦ.
Sept.*

But why should *Elihu* joyn them with *Job*, seeing they held Opinions contrary to *Job*? True, they did, yet they were not able

able to make good their Arguments, or convince *Job*; they had condemned *Job*, but not answered him, they did their businesse imperfectly, and to halves, or impertinently, and to no purpose; so that all their answerings were called *no answer*, Chap. 32. 3. And therefore *Elihu* might see reason to undertake the satisfaction, not only of *Job*, but of his three friends, who had not given *Job* a satisfactory answer unto that hour.

Others take the word *Companions* in a more large sence, for all that were of his Opinion. As if *Elihu* had said, I challenge all the world, whosoever accompanies thee, or takes thy part in justifying such sayings or assertions, as I have heard from thee, I will answer them all, how many soever they be; I will undertake thee, and all thy Party, *Thee, and thy Companions with thee.*

Hence Note,

He who hath truth on his side, needs not fear the opposition of many, no nor the opposition of all men.

To oppose two is a very great disadvantage; but if a man have the truth on his side, he may oppose all, though he be alone: He may be an *Antipas* (Revel. 2. 13.) a man against all men, as that name of Christs faithful Martyr, there mentioned, doth import. If there be a thousand of them, he may undertake them all, for in answering one, he answers all. *Elijah* said of himself (1 Kings 18. 22.) *I, even I only, remain a Prophet of the Lord*; yet he stood up against all the Idolatrous Prophets of *Baal*, who were no fewer than *four hundred and fifty men*: That we have many with us, is little advantage, and lesse honour many a time. A long train of Followers will do us no good, if our Cause be bad. Truth is strong and will prevail; 'tis vain to fight against it, though our partakers are many. The ancient Fathers observed, how some were wont to cry up those that had the multitude on their side, and to boast that most were of their Opinion. It was the saying of a Worthy in those times, *By my being alone, the word of truth, and the truth of the word, is not at all diminished.* One man and the truth are strong enough to oppose a multitude in error, and a multitude of errors. The more any men, and the more men appear in opposing truth, the more is God engaged in faithfulness to appear for it. When one boasted to St Hierome that he had a multitude of Followers in his Opinion; he answered, That

the

Non mea solitudo
dine minuitur.
verbum veritas.
Disum
Liberii ad Con-
stantium Arri-
anum. Theod.
lib. 2. Histor.
Eccl. c. 16.

wonders the Heavens are; see with admiration what a vastness, what an extensiveness there is in the Heavens above thee. Thus the word is used by the Prophet, (*Isa. 42. 18.*) *Look ye blind, that ye may see.* It is a Prophecy of Gospel times: that is, Consider the Messages and Mysteries of the Gospel exactly, view them well, that ye who are blind may behold the glorious light that shines forth in them. There were many blind ones in Christ's time, that looked upon the things of the Gospel, and did not see; the Pharisees look upon them, and they were among the blind ones; they indeed had better thoughts of themselves, and therefore put that question to Christ in scorn, (*John 9. 40.*) *Are we blind also?* They did not look so as to see; they were blind when they looked, and blind after they looked: The holy Prophet exhorts poor blind souls to whom the Gospel should come, to look better, to look again and again, till they saw, Look ye blind, that ye may see; That is, be diligent and humble, that ye may see the light shining in the Gospel. The proud Pharisees who would not see the light which Christ offered to them, were the worst of blind ones.

This is the *Look* which the word in the Text calls for. *Look unto the Heavens, and see;* it cannot be understood of the outward sight only, for he that looks upon the Heavens cannot but see them; but a man may look a great while upon the Heavens, and not see them considerately, nor understand what he seeth. The words import attention and consideration: And so they are used and placed (*2 Kings 3. 14.*) *Were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the King of Judah, I would not look unto thee, nor see thee;* said Elisha to Jehoram King of Israel; that is, I would give thee no respect, nor take notice of thee. In this sense the Prophet represents the Church bespeaking the incompassionate Spectators of her calamity, (*Lam. 1. 12.*) *Is it nothing to you, all ye that passe by? Behold and see (that is, weigh it well, and consider) if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow. Look unto the Heavens and see.*

And Behold (with like attention) the Clouds. There is some difference among Interpreters, about this word which we render Clouds. The Hebrew properly signifies *Thinness*; but a Cloud, is thick, and consists of many Aereal vapors, condensed into a body; and therefore this word cannot well be translated a Cloud, (saith this Author) but the *thin Heavens*, that is, the higher Heavens, those above the Airy Heaven.

Intentis oculis intuitus est.

Nomen hoc עָנָן non potest significare Nubes, quæ sunt substantiæ densæ, nempe Aer condensatus: At Shehakim disti sunt a substantiæ tenuitate. qualis est substantia calis; ergo verò nubes celos.

E

Again, Pise.

דִּקְרָוּ ut
plurimum æ-
thera & nubes
significat.
Bold.

Again, The Clouds are lower than the Heavens, they are neer-
est to us, they are ingendred in the middle Region, nor do they
at any time rise higher than that Region. Forasmuch then as *Elihu*
is endeavouring by the consideration of the highness of Gods roy-
al seat, or of the vast distance (as the Prophet speaks) of the ha-
bitation of his Holiness and of his Glory from us, to prove, that
neither any good we do can profit him, nor any evil we do, reach
to his disadvantage; therefore it may seem not to make much for
the purpose of *Elihu*, to call *Job* to behold the Clouds, which are
neer us, comparatively, though their distance from us be really
very great: but I conceive, notwithstanding that Criticisme of
the word, and this reason, we may well enough abide by the Tran-
slation, which saith, *Behold the Clouds*; for though the Clouds are
thicker than the Air, yet they are but thin, and are soon disper-
sed by winde and rarified by heate.

Again, Supposing (as indeed they do) that the Clouds move
in the lower part of the Heavens, it encrease and hightens the
sense of the words to the purpose, for which *Elihu* makes use of
them. As if he had said, Behold and see the Heavens, the up-
per Heavens, the Starry Heavens, they are higher than thou, yea,
behold the Clouds which are neerest to us, and much, very much
below the Starrs, those especially which Astronomers call the
fixed Starrs; yet do but behold the Clouds, which at the top of
some hills one may touch with his hand, (some describe great
men hiding their heads among the Clouds) Behold, I say, the
Clouds which are lowest, yet they are higher than thou, they are
beyond thy reach; much more the Heavens, most of all God, who
is higher than the highest Heavens. Thou canst neither add to,
nor diminish or blemish the beauty of the Heavens, thou canst
not make a cloud better or worse; What then canst thou do to or
against the God of Heaven? To convince *Job* of this, is the pur-
pose of *Elihu* in calling him to the view of the Heavens. Now
forasmuch as *Elihu* invites *Job* to the view and Contemplation of
the Heavens;

Note; First,

*It is our duty to study and meditate the natural works of God,
or his works in Nature; Especially the Heavens, which are
so eminent a part of his works.*

The Scripture calls some, *Starr-gazers*, such are they, who
study

ſtudy the Heavens to a very evil purpoſe, drawing men off from their ſole dependance upon God, by foretelling the events of things, and deſtinies of perſons, from the poſitions and motions of the heavenly Bodies or Luminaries. This kind of Studying and Contemplating the Heavens, is one of the greateſt vanities under Heaven, a vanity often reproved in the Scriptures of the holy Prophets; thus to be *ſtarr-gazers*, or *Heaven-beholders* is our ſin: but there is a Contemplation of the Starrs which is our duty and commendation, (*Pſal. 8. 3, 4.*) *When I conſider* (in that great volume of the works of God) *the Heavens, the work of thy fingers, the Moon and the Starrs which thou haſt ordained; What is man that thou art mindfull of him, &c.* David did both look and ſee, he beheld the Heavens for a good purpoſe, a godly purpoſe, his own abaſement, and the advancement of the glory and goodneſs, or of the glorious goodneſs of God, in ſpreading ſuch a Canopy, ſparkling with perpetual fires for him to walk under, and do his work by. And doubtleſs, did we with enlightned eyes behold and ſee the natural Heavens, we ſhould become more ſpiritual and heavenly.

Secondly, In that we have here three words, *look, ſee, and behold.* Note,

The works of God, Eſpecially the Heavens, are diligently to be Conſidered.

We may look to the Heavens and not ſee, we may ſee the Heavens and not behold them. Let me here again mind the Reader of the Emphaſis of that word; it notes a looking unto, or upon the Object, as a Hunter looks for a Hare, or a Fowler for a Bird; how doth he pry and look into every tuſt and buſh? So the word is uſed (*Jer. 5. 26.*) *Among my people are found wicked men: they lay waite (or they eye and behold) as one that ſetteth ſnares, they ſet a trap, they catch men.* All the viſible works of God, much more the Heavens ſhould be diligently conſidered, looke into, ſeen, and beheld. It was a good Concluſion of one of the Ancients, who ſaid, *That man hath not looked unto Heaven, that hath only looked upon Heaven.* A bare look is not ſufficient, he muſt look with admiration, or till he cannot forbear to admire, as the firſt Latine word in that ſentence ſignifies properly. A man may look upon a Picture, and yet not behold it diſcerningly; he may ſay, that's the

In calum non ſuſpicit, qui calum tantum aſpicit. Origen.

picture of a man, yet not consider the Art of the workman in drawing it; he may see it is the picture of a man, not of a beast, at a look, but he must see it exactly, if he would find out the worth and workmanship of it. A man in passage (as some speak) may see a house, yet not apprehend the Symmetry of the Plat-form, the skill of the Architect, nor the commodiousness of its Situation; to discern these calls for serious consideration, and settled reviews. As in the Natural works of God, the Heavens made for man, so much more in his Spiritual works, the making of a Heaven in man, or man Heavenly, require our deepest thoughts, and most studious re-searches. O how many are there who look transiently upon those works of God, who never see nor behold them, never enter into the secrets of them! many know some Truths, yet never looked into any, nor laboured to comprehend with all Saints (or as all Saints ought to do) what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of them; and therefore attain not to that riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, as the Apostle speaks (Col. 2. 2.) but are like children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine, as the same Apostle describes them, Eph. 4. 14. Remember, we are to look and see, and behold the Natural works of God, how much more the Spiritual Mysteries of the Gospel, and the works of grace & these indeed are to be looked upon, and seen, and beheld, those other are not to be left unlooked upon.

Note, Thirdly,

The Heavens are a Divine Glasse, wherein we may see much of God; they are a Natural Alphabet, the Letters whereof being well placed, and rightly put together, we may spell the name of God, his Wisdom, Power, and Goodness.

Thus the Apostle argues (Rom. 1. 19, 20.) *That which may be known of God is manifest in them, or to them; that is, to the very Heathens. His proof for this, is taken from the poynt now proposed: For the invisible things of him from the Creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and God-head. The Apostle layes it down in general, Whatsoever is made, whatsoever is part of the Creation, holds out somewhat of God: The very Clods of the Earth.*

Earth declare his Power; how much more the Clouds and Starrs of Heaven? Therefore *Look to the Heavens, Behold the Clouds, consider them, (Psal. 19. 2.) They declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his handy-work.* If you ask more particularly, *what do they declare?* I answer, First, *That God is; every Creature doth so; if there be a Creature, there must needs be a Creator; if there be Effects, there must be an Efficient; the made Heavens declare their Maker.* Secondly, *The Heavens declare, not only that God is, but that he is above.* Christ hath taught us to pray, *Our Father, which art in Heaven; God is every where, yet there especially; Heaven is the Habitation of his Holiness, and of his Glory.* Thirdly, *In the purity of the Heavens, we may see the holiness and purity of God; and they being so incorruptible and unchangeable, declare* Fourthly, *The incorruptibility and unchangeableness of God: He that made them such, is much more such himself. The very unchangeableness of the Heavens, is changeable, compared with the unchangeableness of God.* The Heavens (saith David, Psal. 102. 25, 26.) *are the work of thy hands; they shall perish, but thou shalt endure (or stand), yea all of them shall wax old like a Garment: as a Vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.* Fifthly, *The Heavens which God hath built as a House for himself, being so high above the reach of the Creature, shew us that God is infinitely exalted above the reach and molestation of sinful man; that's the thing which Elihu aims at, as appears by what followeth in the next words. Look to the Heavens, and see, behold the Clouds which are higher than thou.*

Vers. 6. *If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what dost thou unto him?*

As if he had said, *When thou lookest to the Heavens, thou plainly seest thou canst do nothing against them; it would be a vain thing for thee to attempt the Heavens, to clamber up to the Clouds; surely then, thy sinnings, thy trespassings, thy discontents, and complaints cannot hurt God; therefore be quiet.*

If thou sinnest.

The word here used, notes sin in the least degree, any error or *RECKLESS* deviation

deviation from the Rule ; but it comprehends sins of the highest degree, even such as the Prophet calls (*Amos 5. 12.*) *Mighty sins.* If thou sinnest at the greatest rate, at the height of blasphemy,

what dost thou against him ?

למען Non tam nocere, quam operare et laborare significat. q. d. Laborando et adnitiendo quid tandem efficies quo illum ledas. Pined.

The Hebrew is, *What workest thou against him ?* Properly the word signifieth only to work ; we render it *by working against*, that is, to the hurt and disadvantage of another, to his mischief and undoing. As if he had said, *If thou shouldst set thy shoulder to the work, if thou shouldst do evil with both hands greedily, yet thou canst make no work of it in this matter, what dost thou against him ? what hurt hath he by it ?* And to assure Job that he hath none, nor can have any, *Elihu* serves him up the same Messie in another Dish of words, in the close of the verse.

Or if thy transgressions be multiplied.

Here *Elihu* speaks as high, as he meant before. Transgressing is more than ordinary sinning ; though (as was toucht upon the word) under sinning he comprehended any, the most extraordinary transgressings. If thy sins be transgressions, rebellions, or prevarications, and they be multiplied, if thou sinnest out of malice and wrathful purpose against God himself ; and dost not only commit some one of these, but many, and heapest them up together, yet &c.

וְכַד Et ad uolentiam et numerum communis est.

If thy transgressions be multiplied. The word signifies both magnitude and multitude ; hence some render, *If thy transgressions be great ;* we say, *If they be many.* Sin as much as thou wilt, and sin as often as thou wilt ; sin as much as thou canst, what hurt hath God by it ? Some by sin in the former part of the verse, understand that evil which is committed immediately against God ; and by *transgressions* in this latter clause, such evils as are done against our neighbour : But I see no need at all to be so distinct, we may take it respecting God, or man, or both ; for those sins which we commit against man, are also against God ; he is the person offended, his Law is broken, against whomsoever the sin is committed. *If thou multiply thy transgressions,*

What dost thou unto him ?

מה תעשה לו

That word, *What dost thou ?* signifies not only, or not so much, strong

strong labour and endeavour, as the former did, but cunning in labour, and skill in labour. As if he had said, *Though a man set all his wits a work to do evil, what can he do to him? Neither pains nor skill, neither industry nor policy, neither open force nor secret stratagems, can do him any, the least annoyance.* Some Creatures are weak and inconsiderable, as to any thing they can do by outward power, yet they can do much by their subtilty, and cunning; but neither the one, nor the other can do any thing unto God. Scruce up thy wits to the highest pin, or peg, yet thou canst do nothing really prejudicial unto him. The words are plain; from them

Observe, First,

God receives no damage by the sin of man, how great, or how many soever his sins are.

A man may quickly vex and undo himself by sin. Wisdome saith (Prov. 8. 36.) *He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul: All they that hate me, love death.* But the sinner cannot hurt God, he is far above us; man can no more hurt God by sin, than he can hurt the Clouds, or the highest Heavens. Had we an enemy above the Clouds, were it not a madnelle to shoot arrows, or bend our forces against him? *What is man to God!* The School-man concludes, *Nothing can be added to, nothing can be diminished, nothing taken from God by any act of man: Yet man, as much as in him lyes, takes away from, and gives or brings to God, when he either keeps, or doth not keep that order which God hath appointed.* Sinners shall be judged and dealt with, as they that have greatly annoyed and disadvantaged God, as they that have rob'd and spoyl'd him, as they that have smitten and wounded him, as they that have abased him, and laid him low: And there is reason they should be judged as having done so, forasmuch as they do their utmost to do so. Thus they are described (Psal. 2. 1, 2.) *The Heathen rage, and the People imagine a vain thing. The Kings of the Earth set themselves, and the Rulers, &c.* And why all this? what was it for? *It was against the Lord, and against his Anointed.* This was done by the Princes and Great Ones of the world; yet they were so far from being able to prejudice the Lord, either in his Person, or in his Interest, that he did but laugh at them for it. And 'tis considerable that God is described there,

(according

Per alium hominem Deus nihil potest accrescere vel deperire; Sed tamen homo in quantum in se est, aliquid subtrahit Deo, vel ei exhibet, cum servat vel non servat ordinem quem Deus Instituit.
Aquin. 1. 2da. q. 21. Art. 4. Ad primum.

(according to the notion used by *Elihu* in the Text) sitting in the Heavens, (vers. 4.) *He that sitteth in the Heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision.* And why doth the Lord laugh? surely because he sees they can no more hurt or hinder him in his purposes, by any of, or all their sinful advising, and attemptings, than if they should hope to batter down the Heavens by discharging a Pot-gun against them. And therefore he concludes with a triumphant *Yet*, (vers. 6.) *Yet have I set my King* (after you have done your worst) *upon my holy Hill of Sion.* The sins of men do turn to the glory of God, but to their own shame. The sins of Gods own children turn to the glory of his mercy; those huge heaps, and numberless numbers of sins committed by his Children before Conversion, what do they in the issue, but lift up the glory of his Grace in the pardon of them? And the rebellions committed by impenitent sinners, going on in obstinacy to the end, without Conversion, what do they but lift up the glory of God in his Justice, and wonderful judgements, which he will bring upon them? The sins of the old world (which was a world of sin, all flesh having corrupted their way before God, and there being but one righteous Family found in it) all those sins (I say) did not dammage God at all, but indeed they glorified both his Patience and his Justice; his Patience, in sparing them so long, even an hundred and twenty years after warning given; his Justice, in sending the Flood at last, which brought swift destruction upon them, and swept them all away. The unnatural crying sins of *Sodom*, did not hurt the God of Heaven, but God took advantage thereby, to glorifie his Justice, in raining Fire and Brimstone upon them from Heaven, (*Gen. 19. 24.*) *Pharaoh* by all his opposition against the *Israel* of God, did not disadvantage God, but gave him an advantage to make his Power known, by swallowing up him and his *Egyptian* Host in the waters of the Red Sea. That which is done against the Will of God, fulfills the Will of God. The sins of men are so far from hurting the God of Heaven, that they glorifie him among men on Earth; while they behold him either turning the evil which is done into good, or punishing them for their evil doings. That which men speak or do against God, like an Arrow shot up into the Ayre, falls down upon their own heads. *David* (*Pf. 111. 2.*) breaks out wonderfully into the praise of God upon this consideration. *The works of the Lord are great,*
long

sought out of all them that have pleasure in them. These works of God wherein we should take pleasure, are not only works of mercy to the Godly, (vers. 3, 4, 5.) but of vengeance upon the wicked, (vers. 6.) He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the Heavens. The works of his hands are Verity and Judgement, (vers. 7.) That is, judgement for Saints in saving them, and upon sinners in consuming them.

We should much contemplate the works of God, in bringing glory to himself out of the sins of men. The Angels sinned and fell; man sinned as soon almost as he was set up: These Creatures did that which God would not have done, yet God brought about that which he would. And thus it is to this day among all the children of men; while they break holy Commandments, God fulfills his holy Counsels; no thanks to them, yea woe to them. So then, the Lord hath no hurt by sin; which way soever sinners turn themselves, they cannot turn away his Counsels, nor turn from his Counsels: When they are disobeying his revealed will, he is doing his secret will, in which God is most righteous, and in his season will lift up his Righteousnesse and Holinesse, his righteous and holy Will, in the face of all the sinners in the world, and they shall know and confesse that he hath served his own wise and holy purposes, even in those Providences wherein they have had no purpose, but to serve their foolish and unholy lusts and pleasures. We have an illustrious proof of this, in that extreamely evil and unnatural practise of men good in the main, the holy Patriarchs, against their own Brother (Gen. 50. 20) who told them plainly, when he meant them no evil, but good, But as for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it for good; to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

Further, To clear the Point in general, we may distinguish of sin, as having a threefold opposition; First, Against our selves. Secondly, Against our Neighbour. Thirdly, Against God. This division or distinction of sins, must be so understood that the two former, namely, sin against our selves, and against our Neighbour, brings a real detriment, and disadvantage to our selves, and to our Neighbour. But as sin hath respect to God, it doth not bring any real detriment to him: Only it may be said, First, The will of many sinners is raised up to that height of wickednesse, as purposely to set themselves to dishonour God, to blaspheme his

F name,

De eo quod agitur contra Dei voluntatem, voluntas ipsius vel mala in bonum convertentur vel mala punientur impletur. August. Enchirid. c. 100.

Miro et ineffabili modo, non fit præter ejus voluntatem, quod etiam contra ejus voluntatem fit: quis non fieret, si non sineret: nec utique nolens finit sed volens. Nec sineret bonum fieri male, nisi omnipotens etiam de malo facere posset bene. August. in Psal. 111.

name, and *do deſpight to the Spirit of Grace*, (Heb. 10. 29.) which is the utmoſt length that ſin or luſt can go. Secondly, The nature of every ſin, or every ſin conſidered in its nature, is a wrong or a hurt to God; for it is an unconformity to his Will, and a breach of his Law: Yet as to himſelf God receives no hurt, nor poſſibly can receive hurt by any, the fouleſt, moſt ſinful ſin.

But ſome may ſay, *Doth not ſin damage God at all; could Ellyhu ſay in Truth, What doſt thou againſt him, or into him, if thou ſinneſt?* Is ſin nothing to God? The Church complained, and cryed out to thoſe that paſſed by her, (Lam. 1. 12.) *Is it nothing to you, all ye that paſſe by?* Are all my afflictions nothing to you? May not God ſay much more, Are all your tranſgreſſions nothing unto me? Are our ſins nothing to him? Is he unconcerned in them? How can this be? There are ſeveral Scripture-Expreſſions which ſhew clearly that we do much againſt God when we ſin, and much for him when we ſin not, or abſtain from ſin.

Fiſt, When a People, eſpecially when a profeſſing People, ſin, *The name of God is prophaned*; and is that nothing to God? Is it not againſt God, to have his name prophaned? We find the Lord charging this upon his People (Ezek. 36. 20, 21.) *They prophaned my name among the Heathen, &c.* To prophan the name of God, is to make it as an unholy, as a common, yea, as a corrupt thing; and is this nothing to God?

Secondly, To ſin is to diſhonour God, 'tis called, *A deſpiſing of God*, (1 Sam. 2. 30.) *Them that honour me, I will honour; and they that deſpiſe me, ſhall be lightly eſteemed.* Is it nothing to be deſpiſed, to be diſhonoured? If a man be deſpiſed, he thinks himſelf wronged; loſſe of honour is a great loſſe.

Thirdly, We find in Scripture, that ſome kind of ſinning is *blaſpheming*. The Apoſtle tels the Jews (Rom. 2. 24.) *The name of God is blaſphemed among the Gentiles, through you*: That is, his name is evil ſpoken of, a bad report is brought upon his name, he hears ill among evil men, *among the Gentiles, through you*, that is, through the unanſwerableneſſe of your doings, to your ſayings, or through the unlikeneſſe of your praſtiſes, to your profeſſion. To blaſpheme the name of God is to ſtrike through, to wound the name of God; it is ſomewhat to a man to have his name ſtruck through with the poiſoned Arrows and Darts of reproach. An ill tongue falls heavy, and cuts deep. A blaſphemed name is a tongue-

tongue-beaten name: And is this nothing to God?

Fourthly, Some sins are not only in themselves a contempt of God, but they are committed in contempt of God. When men sin presumptuously, and with a high hand; when they sin with a command shining in their eye, with a threat sounding in their ear, they even send a defiance to Heaven, and bid God do his worst: And is this nothing against God? nothing unto God? One of the Ancients writing at large of two Cities, calleth one of them, *The earthly and unholy City, made by the love of our selves, even to the loathing and contempt of God.* (Love to our selves, rising up to the contempt of God, doth all the mischief in the world.) The other City he calleth *holy and heavenly, and that* (saith he) *is built by the love of God, or when we love God even to a loathing and contempt of our selves, and of all our own concerns, interests and advantages.* When a man comes to love God with a loathing of himself, then he is indeed a builder of the holy City: And when sinners act with an inordinate love to themselves, they at once cast contempt upon God, and build that bad City; and is this nothing to God?

Augustinus,
l. 14. De Ci-
vitate Dei.
cap. 28.

Fifthly, The Scripture saith, *God is angry with sin.* A wise man will not be angry with that which is nothing to him, or which doth nothing against him; a wise man will not be angry for nothing, much lesse will the only wise God.

Sixthly, The Scripture saith, *God is grieved for the sins of men.* Surely God will not be grieved for that which is nothing unto him. Himself saith, *sinners fret him,* (Ezek. 16. 43.) *Thou hast fretted me in all these things.* A well tempered man will not fret for that which doth not some way or other afflict him. We read (Isa. 63. 10.) *That Israel vexed his holy Spirit so much, that he was turned to be their enemy, and fought against them.* And had they done nothing against him? Yea, it is said (Gen. 6. 6) God was so much afflicted with the sins of the old world, that he repented that he had made man upon the Earth, and it grieved him at his heart. Doubtless that is somewhat to God, which grieves him thus, and goes to his very heart. And let us take heed of thinking sin is nothing to God; though *Elihu* saith here to *Job*, *What dost thou unto him, if thou sinnest?* Sin hath done all the mischief to man that ever was done him, nor can any thing do him a mischief, but his sin. And though God, as *Elihu* argueth truly, be a-

above the reach of any mischief that sin or sinners can do him, yet upon tryal they will be found guilty of, and cast for doing much, and that very mischievously against God. And therefore

For answer to the Objection, know, The glory of God may be considered two ways; First, In it self. Secondly, In its manifestations: O, we may consider God, First, In his Essential glory and blessedness; Secondly, In his manifestative glory and blessedness. The Glory and Majesty of God in it self, or his Essential Glory is alwayes the same, and receives neither encrease nor diminution; for 'tis infinite and perfect, or infinitely perfect; and that's the definition of *Perfection*, or defined perfection, to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken. So then, Consider God in himself, and 'tis true, our sins are nothing to him, they hurt him no more than the Starres are hurt by throwing stones into the Ayre at them, or the Sun is hurt by casting Darts up at it, or the Moon is hurt by the barking of Dogs at it; we can no more hurt or hinder the good or glory of God by our sins, than Sun, Moon and Starres in Heaven, are hurt or hindred in their Course, by such angry assaults from Earth.

But

Secondly, Consider the manifestations of the glory of God, and this is hindred, or damaged by sin. That's the meaning of all those Scriptures, where 'tis said, *his name is prophaned, dishonoured, blasphemed*; the present manifestations of his glory, which should break out every where, are clouded and eclipsed by sin. And this, their sins do especially who professe his name. Professors are obliged where-ever they come, to hold out the favour and excellency of his name: And therefore God will deal with knowing sinners, as with those that hurt and wound him, as with those that have grieved and broken him, as with those who have burdened and troubled him, yea, as with those who would destroy him. Sin is an enemy to God, and would dethrone and thrust him out of the world; therefore sinners shall be dealt with as such as have highly hurt and wronged God. Sinners have sometimes risen up to such expressions of wickedness, that they would even pull God out of Heaven; it is in the nature of every sin, and in the spirit of many sinners to do so, they carry a daily enmity in their hearts.

Peccatum vocatur Deicidium appetens sc: Deum destruere.

There-

Therefore woe to those who say of God, God is not hurt by our sins? why then should we trouble our selves about them? yes, the Lord will at last let all sinners know he hath been concerned in their sins; though they have not at all toucht his Essential Glory, yet they have darkned and flurr'd the manifestations of his Glory. And therefore I answer,

Secondly, All those Scriptures before alledged, importing that sin grieves God, vexes him, and is very burthensome to him; all those are spoken either of *God-man, Jesus Christ*, who was made like unto us in all things, except sin, and is spoken of in the Histories and Prophecies of the Old Testament, before he took flesh, as having those (in him) sinlesse passions of anger, and sorrow, and grief, which were found in him after he appeared in the flesh: Or if expounded of God, strictly considered, then what is in those Scriptures spoken of God, must be understood after the manner of men, yet as becomes God, who is without all passions and repentings: Or they are to be understood, not as importing Affections in God, but Effects upon men. When men sin, God doth such things as angry men use to do, such things as men do that are grieved with what others have done, and repent of what themselves have done. If grief, anger, repentance, were properly wrought in God, when we sin, our sins must needs be some, yea much annoyance to him. But while man sees and feels such Effects as these passions produce, the Lord is infinitely exalted above the least feeling of these passions, he remains ever the same: That's it which *Elihu* signifieth, and holds out to *Job*; we may trouble one another, and trouble our selves by sin, but we cannot at all trouble God. *If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him, what unto him?* I shall conclude, and gather up the sence of this Context in these four brief Deductions. Take two of them Negatively, and two Affirmatively.

*Hæc de Deo
dicuntur ap-
pomonantibus
et intelligenda
sunt de homi-
nibus.*

First, *God doth not punish sinners in anger, only, though he be angry only with sin.*

Secondly, *God doth not punish sinners, at all, for fear.* He fears none, whom none can hurt.

The two Affirmatives take thus:

First, *When God punisheth sin, he doth it out of pure love to Justice, or purely out of love to Justice.*

Secondly, *God afflicts the godly in mercy; 'tis not because they have done him hurt, but for their good.*

Elihu

Elihu proceeds further to prove, that as *Job* could not hurt God by his sins, so his righteousness and innocency were no advantage to him; and therefore it must needs follow, that his sins could only hurt, and his righteousness only profit himself, and such as were like himself.

Vers. 7. *If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? and what receiveth he at thy hands?*

Vers. 8. *Thy wickedness may hurt a man, as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man.*

Elihu having shewed in the former verse, that the sin of man cannot detract any thing from, nor in the least hinder the happiness of God; proceeds in the 7th verse to shew, that the sinfulness, yea that the righteousness of man cannot advantage, nor advance the happiness of God: And therefore lest he should seem to make both the sin and the righteousness of man to be of no use, he states the matter in the 8th verse, and tells us both to whom the wickedness of man is hurtfull, and to whom the righteousness of man is profitable; Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man; but neither can thy wickedness hurt, nor thy righteousness help or advantage God. That's the summe of these two verses.

Vers. 7. *If thou be righteous, what givest thou him?*

As if he had said; *There is no reason (O Job) that thou shouldst at any time (as thou oftentimes hast) proclaim thy own righteousness, as if that added any thing to God.* *Job* was not ignorant of that; But the speech of *Elihu* had this scope in it, to reprove him for complaining that his goodness profited himself nothing, because though he was far from wickedness, yet he was afflicted, whereas many wicked men prospered and lived in full content; to which poynt his other friends had not answered. And further, *Elihu* urgeth *Job* with this, because he had so industriously defended his own righteousness, as if he would intimate that God was a gainer by it; whereas if God at any time rewardeth our good deeds, that proceedeth from his own goodness and Free Grace, not from any obligation which we have put upon him, by what we have done, how well soever we have done it. *If thou be righteous, what givest thou him?* This supposition, *if thou be righteous*, hath in it

a grant, if not an affirmation, that a man may be righteous; For though all men naturally, or in nature, are unrighteous, yet thorough grace all men, that is, all men who receive grace are righteous: And they who receive grace are righteous under a threefold notion. First, they are righteous by an imputed righteousness, or by the righteousness of another accounted to them; and thus every godly man is righteous, because freely justified. Secondly, they that have grace are righteous by an Inherent Righteousness, by a stock or a principle of Righteousness planted in them at their Conversion. *In conversion, not only the acts, but the state and nature of a man is changed. He who before was nothing but a bundle of unrighteousness, becomes a righteous man;* that is, he hath a righteous principle planted in him and abiding with him. Thus a godly man is righteous, because he is sanctified. Thirdly, every man that hath grace, is a Righteous man by a righteousness flowing out from him, or by a practical righteousness; he is righteous by the doing of Righteousness; The former is Righteousness by Conversion, this is Righteousness by Conversation; and this flows from the former, as the Apostle *John* speaks in his first Epistle (Chap. 3. 5.) *He that doth righteousness, is righteous;* that is, he is in a righteous state through Justification, and hath righteousness planted in him through Sanctification; And he that is thus righteous in his state, is also a practiser of Righteousness in his way. As it is said of that worthy pair *Zachary* and *Elizabeth*, (Luke 1. 6.) *They were both Righteous, walking in all the Ordinances and Commandments of God blameless.* Here was practical Righteousness, they were righteous workers, their course was a course of Righteousness, as themselves were in a state of Righteousness. And thus, I conceive, *Elihu* is chiefly to be understood here; because righteousness in this place is opposed to unrighteous actions. *If thou wert Righteous;* that is, if thy wayes or thy courses were as righteous, as thou hast often reported and asserted them to be (for *Job* in the 27th Chap. said, *He would not let go his Righteousness, he would hold it till he dyed;* he would never give up his Integrity, how much soever his friends accused him; he would no more give it up, than give it off; Now saith *Elihu*, *If thou art righteous,* as thou sayest, and standest so much upon it, let it be granted, seeing thou wilt needs have it so, *that thou art righteous,* The Septuagint render so, *Seeing thou art Righteous.*

Righteous, or for as much as thou art *Righteous*, that is, according to thy own affirmation, yea though God hath said so of thee, and born that witness of thee) yet what is that to God ?

What givest thou unto him ?

*Iustitia tuantibi-
hil deum juve-
re, ne igitur tu-
am vendites ius-
titiam. Chry-
sost.*

*Donum est rei
licite nullo ju-
re cogente me-
ra liberalitate
facta collatio.
Hoslien.*

If thy conversation were such as no blame could be laid upon it ; though no spot could be seen upon thy garments, after all thy walkings thorough the affaires of this world, yet *what givest thou unto him ?* Surely nothing at all. Some conceive this was a famous proverbial Speech amongst the godly in those times, full of Reverence and high Estimation, or rather Admiration of God ; *If we are Righteous, what is it to God ? or what give we to God ? (What givest thou him ?)* The meaning is, thou givest him nothing. *A gift is the bestowing of some good thing where there is no obligation ;* that's a gift which a man is not bound to bestow by any Law of Righteousness ; A gift is bestowed out of meer liberality, or from a free and bountiful spirit. Now, saith he, *What givest thou unto God ?* What service is there in all thy righteous wayes and works, which thou art not obliged to tender unto God, or which thou art not bound to do ? Thy Righteousness doth not at all oblige God, for whatsoever good thou doest, thou art under a command to do it ; there is a Law commanding, yea, compelling thee, if thou shouldest refuse ; doest thou performe any duty to God or man, which thou art not bound or ingaged to performe ? Surely thou doest not, yea thou canst not. Therefore, *what givest thou unto God ?*

Or what receiveth he at thy hand ?

The words are plain, *giving and receiving are Correlatives ; where there is giving, there is usually receiving ; and where there is receiving, there must be giving. Sometimes there is giving, where there is no receiving.* When Belshazzar promised Daniel great things, if he could Interpret the hand-writing on the wall, (Chap. 5. 17.) He answered, *Let thy gifts be to thy self, and thy rewards unto another.* Daniel would not receive his offer : There was giving in promise on Belshazzars side, but no receiving on Daniels side. Most are so much for receiving, that they love the word *give*, as the Prophet taxed and reproved the Rulers of *Israel*, (Hos. 4. 18.) *Her Rulers with shame :* (that is, shamelessly, or of which they should be ashamed, or for which all cry shame on them!)

them) *do love, Give ye*; that word ſounded well, even like ſweet muſick in their ears: And if others did not offer bribes to corrupt Juſtice, they invited them, *give ye*, we are ready to receive. The Apoſtle puts both theſe together in a good way, (*Phil. 4. 15.*) *No Church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only*: And he would have the Church at *Ephesus* to remember thoſe words of the Lord Jeſus, how he ſaid, *It is more bleſſed to give, than to receive*, (*Acts 20. 35.*) *Artaxerxes*, one of the Perſian Monarchs, was ſurnamed, *Long-hand*; his right hand, or giving hand, being longer than the left; ſhewing, as ſome conjecture, that the Honour of Great Kings is ſeen more in giving than in receiving. But as we have nothing of our own to give unto God, ſo he hath no need to receive any thing of us. Thus *Elihu* here, *What givest thou him? or what receiveth he at thine hand?*

Artaxerxes longimanus dextram maximam habebat longiorem; Regis dignitas est dare quam accipere.

Of thine hand.

He expreſſeth it not barely, *What receiveth he of thee*, but of *thine hand*; becauſe as the hand is the great Inſtrument of working, ſo alſo of giving; we give and beſtow with the hand, (what hath he received of *thy hand*), there is a ſpeciallicie in that. Conſider thy hand, what can the hand of God take out of thy hand? Thy hand is, Firſt, *a weak hand*; Secondly, *a narrow ſcanty hand*; Thirdly, thy hand is an *ineffectual hand* to thy ſelf, it cannot bring any work about to the iſſue, to the full end and accompliſhment; therefore what is thy hand, thy weak, thy narrow, thy ineffectual hand, that God ſhould receive any thing out of thy hand? And then conſider what the hand of God is; His is, Firſt, *a ſtrong hand*; Secondly, *a large, a wide hand*; Thirdly, *a hand full already*; and, Fourthly, as his hand is full already, ſo it is a hand filling all things; *He openeth his hand, and fills all things with good*. Now God having ſuch a hand, how canſt thou fill his hand with thy hand? *What receiveth he at thine hand?* I need not labour further in the explication of the words; Take one general Obſervation from them, which I ſhall draw down into ſome particulars.

The Righteouſneſs or Righteous Actions of men, contribute nothing to God;

They are no advantage to God: The beſt things that we can do,
G cannot

cannot at all better God, or God is never the better for them: That is the meaning of David, (Psal. 16. 3.) speaking as a type of Christ; *My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the Saints which are on the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.* Jerome was of opinion, that these words of the Psalm were taken out of this place of Job. (*My goodness*) that is, my good deeds extend not to thee; the good deeds of Christ did not add any thing to God, they did not give any thing to God; for it is impossible that any good, or any goodness should so be made an addition to him, who is all, and hath all: but (saith he) *to the Saints, to them my goodness extendeth, I can and will do good to them.* Thus St Paul spake to the Athenians, (Acts 17. 25.) *God is not worshipped with mens hands, as though he needed any thing:* God calls for worship, but he is not worshipped, because he needs our worship, or because he would receive some benefit at the hand of worshippers. The same Apostle puts the question, (Rom. 11. 35.) *Who hath given unto him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?* As much as to say, no man hath given any thing to God, he is above and beyond all the gifts, and givings of the creature.

There is a three-fold ground of it, why nothing can be given to God, either to oblige him, or to add any thing to him.

First, *All is due to him, what-ever we do is a debt to him; we cannot make the payment of a debt a gift.* Be as holy and as righteous as you will, as exact in your walkings as you can, it is all of debt, and therefore not a gift. (Luke 17. 10.) *When you have done all, (when you have run your whole Course of obedience, both as to first and second Table duties,) say you are unprofitable servants, we have done no more than was our duty to do. There is no gift, where all is due.*

Secondly, *What-ever we do in a way of Righteousness, is not a gift, nor an advantage to God; for it was all first given us by God, we and all that we have came first from him; whatsoever we have, we have had it of God.* It is said in that place before noted (Acts 17. 25.) *He is not worshipped of mens hands, as if he needed any thing, (why?) for he giveth to all men life and breath, and all things; he gives all things, and therefore he needs nothing, nor can any thing properly be said to be given to him, who giveth all things.* We have that remarkable Scripture (1 Chron. 29. 10.) where

*Nihil accessit
ei nostra justitia,
quæ tota
gratuitum est
illius donum.*

*Scitum est illud
sapientis Hebræi:
da illi*

where David praiseth the Lord for the offering and gift which he himself and his people had brought towards the building of the Temple; And he desired that his offerings might be accepted of the Lord, not so much as they were given by his hand, as because they and the heart to give them, were received from the hand of God. *Wherefore David blessed the Lord before all the Congregation, and said, Blessed be thou Lord God of Israel our Father, for ever and ever, for all that is in Heaven and in Earth is thine; thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. And, now therefore, O God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious Name; But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort; for all things come of thee, and of thy own have we given thee.* And again at the 16th verse; *All this store cometh of thee, and all is thine own.* We cannot be said properly to give another that which is his own already; whatever God receives of us, came from himself: And as whatsoever we give comes from God, so every action or duty which we performe to God, comes from God; he bestows the power to do upon us, before we can do any thing, and therefore it cannot be any addition unto him. There are two graces, which we exercise, very pleasing to God; first, Faith; secondly, Charity; yet neither of these contribute any thing to God. Faith is so far from giving God any thing, that its whole work lyeth in receiving; And though charity be a giving grace, yet it gives to man only, not to God. So then, what doth God receive of man? surely nothing but his own. David enquires (*Psal. 116. 12.*) *What shall I return to the Lord for all his benefits?* Mark that word, *return*; the Hebrew Text may be thus rendred; *what shall I make to return to the Lord of all his renderings, or contributions unto me*; As if he had said, Lord I have received abundance from thee, thou hast payd or recompensed me fully for all my paines, and I am looking over it all, and considering what of it I shall return to thee; it is all thine own, and now Lord what shall I return of it baek again to thee? What he received was returned, if not in kind, yet in effect, and the return of that was but his duty, it could not be his desert. Christ indeed merited and satisfied, because he gave of his own, and as God-man wrought all righteousness for us in his own strength.

Thirdly, The Lord receives nothing at our hands, for he is full already. We can put no more into a full vessel; if there be any

*de suo, quia tu
Et omnia tua
illius sunt. Tu
ex tua offerri-
mus tibi domi-
ne. Druſi
Etiamſi quod
debemus red-
dere deo cupia-
mus, tamen de
ſuo reddimus.
Salvade Eccl:
Cathol.*

empty space, you may put somewhat more into a Vessel, but when it is as full as it can hold, what can you put into it? Who can make the Ocean fuller, which hath in it the fullness of all waters? All that we can give to God is not so much an encrease to him, as a drop of the Bucket is to the whole Ocean. Who can make the Sun brighter? all we do to, or for God, is not so much as a Candle to the Sun. What can he receive, who hath all things in himself? God is infinitely full, therefore there is no giving to him, nor receiving by him at our hands. That word which is one of the Titles of God holds forth as much, he is *Elshaddi*, that is, *A God every way full, every way sufficient, he is all-sufficient for us, and he is Self-sufficient*. Some of the Heathens had such notions and glimmering apprehensions of God. Plato saith, The exercise of Godliness, or of Worship, is acceptable to God, but is not at all profitable to God. It is manifest, saith Aristotle, that God needs no friends, nor any thing to help him. The Sacrifices of the Jews were great and royal Offerings, they brought their Sheep, and Oxen, and Bullocks, and Goats in abundance, yet the Lord would have them know he had no need of them, (*Psal. 50. 8.*) *I will not reprove thee for thy Sacrifices, and burnt offerings to have been continually before me; I will take no Bullock out of thy house, nor he-Goat out of thy Folds, for every Beast of the Forrest is mine, and the Castel upon a thousand Hills: I know all the Fowls of the Mountains, and the wild Beasts of the Field are mine. If I were an hungry, I would not tell thee, for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.* Some conceive that *Elihu* aims especially at those gifts. If thou bringest or givest many sacrifices, what receiveth he at thy hand? The Lord doth not call for sacrifices *because he is hungry*; that is, hath need of them. The Lord (*Zeph. 2. 11.*) threatens the gods of the Heathen, that he would starve or famish them; that is, he would destroy the means of their Worship: But who can famish the Lord, whose the world is, and the fulness of it?

Now if God receives nothing at our hands by way of supply, or addition, then

First, *No Creature is necessary unto God*: We all depend on him, he is altogether necessary to us, but we are not necessary to him; we are and ought to be his Servants, but he doth not need our service; we need such a Master, such a Lord, we need to have

Est quidem pietas illi grata, non autem utilis. Plato in Euthyphra. Manifestam est quod nullare Deum, nec amicū egebit. Arist. lib. 7. Eth. c. 12.

have such a one over us, but he needs not such as we are under him. Earthly Masters and Servants have need of one another; Masters keep and maintain their Servants, and Servants are very helpful and profitable to their Masters. As a Servant needs a Master to give him meat and drink, apparel, and the conveniences of this life; so the Master needs the Servant, he needs his work, his labour, his hand, he cannot tell how to do his business without him; Masters cannot live comfortably without their Servants, much lesse honourably, they cannot keep their State and Degree amongst men without Servants; and Servants need their Masters, they cannot subsist, they cannot live, but by wages, or the reward of their labour. God hath made such a tie, knit such a knot among the Creatures, that one, though a Superiour, should not despise the other, though much his Inferiour, for both concur as parts, to the constitution of the whole, or general constitution of the world. But God is not a part, but the Principle, or Constituter of the Universe, not at all depending upon any part of it. If a Servant should have need of his Master, and not the Master of the Servant, the Master would despise his Servant; but God hath so ordered it, that as the Servant needs the Master, so the Master needs the Servant, while himself hath no need of either. God hath no need of our service, but we need his service, or him as our Lord and Master. It is an honour to God that he hath so many to serve him, but it is his greatest honour that he needs none to serve him. Before there were either men or Angels, God had the same honour and happiness that now he hath, he is self-sufficient; *It were a shame and a dishonour to us, should we own him for God, who needed our good;* he cannot be our God, who needs our good. All Creatures need the help and good of one another, and the help or good of all Creatures comes from God; but God himself is strong enough to help himself, and good enough to make himself everlastingly happy. There is nothing without him, but he can be happy without it; there's no Creature, whether thing or person, in Heaven or Earth, necessary to God, either as to his Being, or well-Being: And therefore we may say, not only to the best man on Earth, but to the most glorious Angel in Heaven, (as *Elihu* to *Job*) *What receiveth he of thine hand?*

Secondly, If what we do, adds nothing to God, if he receive nothing by our most righteous services: then surely God shews wonderful

wonderful goodnesse towards us, in that he is pleased to make so great an account of, and set such store by our services and righteousness, even of any, the least good we do in uprightness. Is it not a singular comfort that the Lord puts so much worth upon what we do, though what we do be of no worth to him? and that God should bind himself to us, when he is not at all beholding to us? The Lord doth not say, *What do you give me?* or, *What do I receive at your hands?* thereby to put a slight upon our performances and services; 'tis far from the Lord, that because he hath no need of us, therefore to contemn us; no, he declares a great acceptance of any, the least faithfull service to himself, or to our brethren, which we do at his command. Though, should we stretch our endeavours, and strain our wits to the utmost, to do him good we cannot, yet he doth not undervalue what we do, but takes what is well done, well at our hands, and puts all our good deeds into his Book of Remembrance, and we shall one way or other hear of them again to our comfort. Hence,

Thirdly, We may inferre, *How good is God, who highly rewards us for the good we do, though it do him no good!* Man will scarce thank a man for any good that he doth, unlesse it redound somewhat to himself, much lesse will he pay or reward another for that service which stands him in little, or no stead. If man make a bargain with a man, he comes hardly off with him, if he gets no benefit by it: seeing then the Lord rewards us for those services by which he gets no good at all, how wonderfully doth this declare his goodnesse!

Fourthly, How doth the goodnesse of God appear; seeing though we can adde nothing to his glory, yet if we do good and righteous things, he tells us that we glorifie him, which is the highest commendation imaginable of what we do. 'Tis the Command of Christ (*Mat. 5. 16.*) *Let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good works, may glorifie your Father which is in Heaven.* The Apostles Caution is, *Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God,* 1 Cor. 10. 31. Now though (according to this and the other charge) we, in all we do, sincerely aime at the holding forth and manifesting of that glory and goodness that is in God, yet he receives no encrease of glory; is it not therefore wonderful goodnesse, that he is pleased to say, we glorifie him? (which is the highest attainment of the Creature, and the noblest improve-

improvement of our pains and labours. These and many other inferences, may be made for our instruction, from this humbling question, *If thou be righteous, what givest thou to him, or what receiveth he at thy hands?*

Elihu having told *Job* that neither his sin did hurt God, nor his righteousness advantage him, lest any should thence inferre, surely then it is no great matter whether we be righteous or wicked, whether we do good or evil; to prevent this mischief, he shews that though your sin cannot hurt God, yet it will do hurt enough, and though our righteousness adde no good to God, yet it may do much good. This he doth in the next verse.

Vers. 8. *Thy wickednesse may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man.*

As if he had said, *I will tell thee what will become of the good and evill thou dost, as to advantage or disadvantage; forasmuch as thou canst not advantage God by thy righteousness, nor hurt him by thy wickednesse, it must needs follow, that the one may be helpfull, and the other hurtfull to thy self, and to such as thou thy self art: If it were otherwise, or not so, there would be no difference between the doing of good or evil, as to the Event, how greatly soever they differ in their Nature.*

Si bona agerimus, nostro bono; si mala, nostro malo.

Thy wickednesse may hurt a man as thou art, only it cannot hurt God. God is as great and as happy as ever he was, and he will ever be as great and as happy as now he is, let men do their worst, and be as wicked as they can.

Thy wickednesse, &c.

The word *wickednesse* notes sin in the highest degree, at least of a high degree; every wickednesse is sin, but every sin is not wickednesse; yet we are not to understand *Elihu's* meaning, as if great sins only did mischief and hurt. The truth is, every sin doth hurt and mischief; as a little poyson, and the least poyson may do hurt, unless it be corrected. We use to say of some things, *A little doth not hurt*; but we cannot say a little poyson doth not hurt, unless you do not take it, or unless it be corrected; a little poyson uncorrected will do hurt. So then, when *Elihu* saith here, *Thy wickednesse may hurt*, we are not to understand it only of great sins, as whoredome, murder, perjury, drunkenness, and witchcraft,

Modicum non nocet.

witchcraft, &c. but even of idle thoughts, of vain words, or undue paſſions; theſe hurt as well as greater ſins, commonly called wickedneſſe. *Thy wickedneſſe*

May hurt a man as thou art.

Theſe words (*may hurt*) are not expreſſed in the Original Text, but they are plainly intended and implied: Yet if we ſhould leave them out of the reading, the ſence would be the ſame (*Thy wickedneſſe is to hurt a man as thou art*) That is, thy wickedneſſe is to the hurt or damage of a man as thou art; it may hurt thee or thy brother, it may hurt thy ſelf, or any like thy ſelf.

Hence Note,

Fiſt, *That ſin is a hurtfull thing.*

Whereſoever ſin is, it doth miſchief. Sin is ſo bad in the nature of it, that we have reaſon enough to avoid it and flye from it, and ſin is ſo dangerous in the Effects of it, that we have further, though not more reaſon to avoid it, and flye from it; indeed we ſhould rather (and that is our ſpiritualneſſe in avoiding of ſin) avoid it becauſe of the evil that is in the Nature of it, becauſe it riſeth up againſt the Will, and breaks the holy Commands of God; we have greateſt reaſon to depart from ſin, becauſe it is a departure from God, becauſe of the blackneſſe and filthineſſe of it; yet not onely the blackneſſe of this Coal, but the fire, the eternal fire that is in it, gives us cauſe enough to depart from it. 'Tis true, a truly gracious heart would not ſin, though he might eſcape all the ſad effects of ſin, but when he hears it is as hot as fire, and as deadly as poyſon, and as killing as the plague; when he hears that it is the ruine of Perſons, and of Families, of Churches and Nations, when he hears that 'tis ſin which hath done all the hurt and miſchief that ever was in the world, he ſees he hath further reaſon to dread it, and depart from it.

Again (*Thy wickedneſſe may hurt a man.*)

Note;

Sin doth miſchief to man, and to man eſpecially.

Sin doth miſchief all the world over; the whole Creation groans under the miſchief and vanity, which ſin hath brought upon it, (*Rom. 8. 22.*) Sin hath done damage to the whole Creation; but the
great

great damage which sin doth, is to man, to him that acts it to others before whom it is acted, or towards whom it is acted. Sin is distributed into two sorts, as to its hurtfulness. Sin either respects our selves in the hurt it doth, or others, and those others are either God or our Neighbour; sin hurts our selves most, yet sin as it is a wrong to God, may be said to hurt his honour, and diminish the manifestation of his glory in the world, (as hath been shewed before). And sin is really a wrong to our Neighbour. There are a number of sins committed against our selves, yea, every sin, though committed against our Neighbour, hits and hurts our selves; no man can hurt his Neighbour, but he hurts himself most. So that, although there are many sins which respect others, yet all are against our selves. Some sins (unbelief especially, and the neglect of holy duties) hurt our selves only; there are sins which more properly hurt others, as oppression and uncharitableness; there are several sins which at once hurt others and our selves. Adultery hurts self and others too; evil words hurt our selves and others too, as the Apostle tells us out of a Poet, (1 Cor. 15. 33.) *Evil communication corrupteth good manners*; that is, you corrupt the good manners of others, you debauch others by unfavourable speeches; our ill example hurts our selves and others. Our Neighbour is hurt by our sin. First, By any thing that is a wrong to him, as to his Estate, or as to his Person, or as to his Credit. Secondly, By the scandal of it, when we do that which is evil, it hardens the wicked, and makes them go on more securely in their sin, and keeps them off from the wayes of God; it endangers good men also, and discourageth them in the duties they owe both to God and man in the profession of the Gospel. Thus sin may hurt our selves and our Neighbours.

Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art.

But why saith he *a man as thou art*? What, a man just of thy Complexion, or just of thy height, stature, and pitch? what, a man of thy State and Degree, a man just of thy eminency in the world? certainly no; but when he saith, *A man as thou art*, his meaning is, *any man*, because all men are in many things alike, they are all mortal, and sinful, and weak, and apt to receive hurt by the sins of others. Thus every man is *a man as thou art*.

H

Hence

Hence note
All men are alike.

Though the faces of men are very different, and we know one man from another, because they are unlike in face, yet as to their constitution and natural condition, they are alike; he that is greatest, is such a man as the least; and the strongest is such a man as the weakest, the richest as the poorest, the learnedest as the most ignorant, and the godliest man is as the wickedest man, as to his natural composition. All men are alike in these four things: First, all men need that which is good. Secondly, all men are sensible of that which is hurtful and afflictive to them. Thirdly, all men are apt to take hurt, and to run into danger by the sin and ill Examples of others, or to receive good by their good deeds, and profitable examples, all men being associated in the same common nature, and familiar each to other. Fourthly, all men are alike in this, that they are not self-sufficient, but stand in need of the help of one another; He that is helpful to a man like himself, helpeth himself, and doth acknowledge that (considering humane frailty) he may have occasion to call for and desire the help of another; and therefore (say some) man hath two hands, two armes, that he may understand himself born as much to need and receive help, as to give it. Thus every man is a man as thou art; and upon these and many other Considerations thou mayest hurt a man as thou art. There is an excellent paradox, handled by some of the Ancients; *No man is hurt, but by himself*; for unless a mans soul be hurt, he is not hurt; which is much confirmed by, and appeareth clearly in the example of *Job*. For the devil planted all those engines, and made all those assaults upon and against him, not because he had a design to make him poor, childless, and diseased, (all which, he knew, could not hurt him) but to make him impatient, and to extort one evil and blasphemous word against God from him. But though it be true, that no man is hurt but by himself, yet it is true also, that the sin of one man may hurt another. Oppression hurts other men, (as to civils) whether they will or no; but no sin can hurt another (as to morals) unless he will; no man is infected by vice, if himself refuse, and be against it; yea the oppressions and afflictions which other men thrust violently upon us, cannot hurt us, unless we by our impatience under them bring hurt

*Nemo potest ab
alio ladi nisi a
seipso, nisi enim
quis ledatur a
nimo, non la-
ditur.*

hurt to our selves. The cruel usage of Tyrants, did not hurt the Martyrs; when they burnt them, and imprisoned them, and hanged them, they did not hurt them, because they were patient under those oppressions, and took their sufferings for Christs sake with joyfulness. What hurt did the poverty and ulcers of *Lazarus* do him? What hurt had *Abel* by that inhumane cruelty of his brother *Cain*? What hurt had *Paul* by all his sufferings? What any of the Saints, by imprisonment, or banishment, by being sawne asunder, or slain with the sword? properly no hurt at all. It is out of the power and reach of wicked persecutors to hurt the Witnesses of Christ, though they have power to slay them. *Steven* was not hurt when he was stoned, because he freely gave up himself. In a word, take it thus; First, no man is hurt by the sin of another, but as himself is pleased with, or practiseth the same sin; Secondly, no man is hurt by the temptations of the devil, but as he consents and yeilds to them; Thirdly, no man is hurt by the oppositions and persecutions of others, but as he is impatient under them. *Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art,*

And thy Righteousness may profit the son of man.

That is, thy righteous actions or deeds, may profit the son of man; that is, thy self, or any man, good or bad. Those words, *may profit*, are not expressed, but are clearly implied in the sense of the Text. Righteousness tends to every mans benefit, it may help and profit thy self, it may be helpfull or profitable to those who are about thee, or with whom thou hast to do.

Hence note.

First, *Righteousness, or righteous actions, have profit in them.*

Wickedness turns to mans hurt of it self, but Righteousness doth profit. Although there be a vast and wide difference between mans righteousness and unrighteousness; this latter of it self deserving all manner of evil; and the former, because imperfect at the best, deserving no good at all; yet through the bounty and benignity of God it comes to pass, that the smallest (if sincere) endeavour after righteousness shall profit a man as much as his greatest unrighteousness can hurt or damage him. For God who doth not reward us according to our iniquities, (*Psal. 103. 10.*) will most amply reward us according to our righteousness. The

Apoſtle gave command, *Exercife thy ſelf unto godlineſs*, (follow that trade well; why?) for *godlineſs is profitable unto all things*, (1 Tim. 4. 8.) it profits by vertue of the promiſe, and it hath the promiſe of this life as well as of that which is to come. (Titus 3. 8.) This is a faithfull ſaying, and this I will that thou conſtantly affirm, that they which have believed in God, might be carefull to maintain good works, (why? for) *theſe things are good and profitable unto men*. Some expound theſe words, *good and profitable unto men*, chiefly of doctrine; To teach men to follow works, that indeed is good and profitable doctrine; now if it be a good and profitable doctrine to preſs men to good works, to works of Righteouſneſs, then Righteouſneſs it ſelf, and good works, muſt needs be profitable. There is ſuch an excellency in the nature of Righteouſneſs, it is ſuch an honourable, amiable, and beautifull thing in its own nature, that it is enough to draw us to the doing of it (as ſome have ſaid of Vertue in general, *If vertue could be ſeen, it would draw all to the admiration of it*; ſo I ſay of Righteouſneſs in ſpecial, *If it could be ſeen, it would draw all eyes and hearts after it*) But beſides that, here is an excellent Loadſtone, here is profit, thy Righteouſneſs may profit another; profit draws much, it draws on all men in the world; where there is any profit and benefit to be had, how do men ſtrive to trade there, as if Heaven were to be had there? now Righteouſneſs is profitable; the exerciſe of Righteouſneſs is no poor trade, there is a great deale of advantage in it; and I might ſhew you how every work, good for the matter, done in a right manner, and for right ends, is profitable to others, and to our ſelves. To ſpeak a good word, may be a means to miniſter grace unto the hearers; and to do a good work, of any ſort, miniſters a gracious example to the beholders: by doing good, you may draw others to do good; to ſee one walking in wayes of righteouſneſs, invires and allures others into wayes of righteouſneſs; as bad examples corrupt, ſo good examples inſtruct; as bad examples build up for hell, ſo good examples build up for heaven; To be built or helpt on heaven-ward, is the beſt profit in the world, greater profit than the gain of the whole world. And as every good work miniſters a good example to the beholders, ſo works of Charity miniſter comfort and relief to the receivers, as alſo an occaſion of bleſſing God for their benefactors; yea works of Charity to others are profitable alſo

to our ſelves, for there is a promiſe of reward to thoſe who miniſter the leaſt charities to ſuch as deſerve the greateſt charity, though uſually they find the leaſt, (*Math. 10. 42.*) *Whoſoever ſhall give to drink unto one of theſe little ones, a cup of cold water only* (and how cold is their charity who will not give that!) *in the name of a diſciple, ſhall in no wiſe loſe his reward*; that is, he ſhall ſurely have it. Thus we ſee how profit and advantage, even great profit and advantage comes by Righteouſneſs; yet take heed of thinking that your Righteouſneſs deſerves any the leaſt profit at the hand of God. Though we preſs you to Righteouſneſs as profitable, yet it becomes you to ſay, *we are unprofitable ſervants*, and therefore cannot challenge any profit as our due, how righteous ſoever we are. It doth not at all follow, becauſe we affirme Righteouſneſs will profit us, that therefore Righteouſneſs can juſtifie us, or that, becauſe it is profitable to us, therefore it can ſave us. *All our righteousneſſes are but as a filthy garment*, ſaith the Prophet, and therefore unprofitable for this thing. The Apoſtle counted *all things loſs* (not gain) *duſt* (not profit) *that he might win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having his own Righteouſneſs*, (*Phil. 3. 8, 9.*) Righteouſneſs is profitable, if you keep it in its proper place, and apply it to its proper uſe; it is profitable to what God hath appointed it; he helps us to work Righteouſneſs, and then rewards us for our righteous working: God is not unrighteous to forget our work and labour of love, (*Heb. 6. 10.*) Let us be found in our duty, and then in due time and place we ſhall find our profit. Our experience will teach us at laſt, that while we have been doing good to others, we have done good to our ſelves; *Righteouſneſs is profitable unto all things, and to all men*, as well to thoſe who do it, as to thoſe for whom it is done.

JOB, Chap. 35. Verſ. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

9. *By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry : they cry out by reason of the arme of the mighty.*

10. *But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth Songs in the night ?*

11. *Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowles of heaven.*

12. *There they cry (but none giveth answer) because of the pride of evill men.*

13. *Surely God will not bear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.*

I Have dispatched the first of those great Objections which *Elihu* made afresh against *Job* in this Chapter, his speaking unduly of God. This context contains a second, with the answer to it.

The Connection is given by some thus; Whereas *Elihu* told *Job* at the 8th verse, That his wickedness might hurt a man like himself; He here proves, that the wickedness of man is very hurtfull to men, so hurtfull, that by reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry : They cry out by reason of the arme of the mighty. Yet I shall not prosecute the words in that dependance, but as they are matter of a second complaint or charge brought by *Elihu* against *Job*. The charge is laid down in the 9th verse, and his answer is prosecuted in the 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th verses.

Verſ. 9. *By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry.*

This offended *Job*; the poor cryed, and they had no helper, no deliverer. We may conceive, that *Elihu* gathered up this complaint from the words of *Job*, (Chap. 24. 12.) *Men groan from out of the City, and the soul of the wounded cryeth out, yet God layeth not folly to them :* As if he had said, The Lord lightly passeth by,

by, and takes little notice of the greatest afflictions, the oppressions of the poor, though righteous men.

Elihu grants these general truths ; First, that many are oppressed ; Secondly, that many cry out in their oppressions ; Thirdly, that many remain undelivered from, and unrelieved in their oppressions. **God sometimes seemeth not to regard the groans and cries of the afflicted, nor doth he alwayes presently take vengeance of oppressors according to their folly.** *Elihu* grants all this, he grants that many poor men are so mightily oppressed by the mighty, that they are forced to cry mightily ; yet he strongly acquits God from any such imputation, as those words of *Job* seem to admit or insinuate. And in the prosecution of his answer (as will appear in opening the 10th and 11th verses) he sheweth, that the reason why the oppressed are not delivered, or answered when they cry, is in themselves, and not in God, (and he would have *Job* consider, whether he were not of that number) *they cry* (saith *Elihu*) but they do not cry with such a frame of heart, with such a disposition of spirit, as they ought ; they cry as men pressed rather with the weight of their own sufferings, than toucht with any sense of their sins, or reverence of the sovereignty of God, giving them up to the power of oppressors ; or as having any faith in him for their deliverance, or quiet submission to him, who is ready to help all those who religiously fly to him for refuge, and is able to bring them out of their darkest and most deplorable condition. These may be said either not to pray at all, or they pray not with such holy aims and designs, with such integrity and uprightness of heart, as becometh the people of God : They pray under the power of impatience, or moved with envy, at the power of their adversaries, or with a desire of utmost revenge, which nothing stops them from, but their own want of power, or because they cannot ; and therefore God takes no notice of their prayers, (v. 12, 13.) *There they cry, but none giveth answer ; Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.* That's the summe and scope of the Context. I shall now open the words in order.

Vers. 9. *By reason of the multitude of oppressions, they make the oppressed to cry.*

Here are oppressions, and a multitude of oppressions. The word signifieth

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signifieth *magnitude* as well as *multitude*, the *muchness* as well as the *manyness* (if I may so speak) of the oppressions which were upon them. Any one great oppression will make men cry, how much more many great ones? We render it as a word of number. *By reason of the multitude*

Of oppressions.

puv
Oppressit, vim
fecit, quoniam in-
iuria affecit.

The Original notes *oppression* of all sorts: First, oppression upon the credit and good name of another, by slander and false accusation; So the Septuagint render it, *By reason of calumnies*, or *unrighteous charges*, or *Sycophantismes*, (that's the word in the Greek Translation) *they cry*. False accusers undermine others, and bring them into danger by burdening them with lyes. Secondly, it notes usually oppression upon a mans estate, (1 Sam. 12. 4. Isa. 33. 15. Ezek. 18. 7. Mal. 3. 5.) Thirdly, upon his person, (Isa. 52. 4.) Now when a man is oppressed all over, when his credit or good name is oppressed by calumination, his estate by wrongfull seizure, and his person by violent restraint, here's a troop, a multitude of oppressions. *By reason of the multitude of oppressions*

They make the oppressed to cry.

That is, the oppressed do not only complain a little, but are forced to open lamentations; the load upon them is so heavy, that they cannot contain, *they cry*; yea as the next clause hath it, *they cry out*, as a woman in travel, when her paines come upon her.

They make the oppressed to cry.

They make them cry upon a double Consideration; First, because of the misery which they feel, and are burdened with; Secondly, for the mercy which they desire, expect, and think long a-coming; men cry for ease, for help, for assistance; for deliverance: we may suppose the oppressed ones in the Text crying in all these respects; the burden was so heavy upon them, that it made them cry out for the very weight of it, and they cried and called for some charitable, or tender heart, to come and ease them of it, and deliver them from it. *Elihu* doth not rest in speaking this once, but repeats it again; *By reason of the multitude of oppressions*

preſſions they make the oppreſſed to cry.

They cry out by reaſon of the arme of the mighty.

Theſe words poynt us expreſly to the cauſe of their cry, or out-cry; it was *the arme of the mighty*; which may be taken either properly, or figuratively. Properly, the Arme is a well known and moſt uſefull member of the body: And becauſe there is a great deal of ſtrength and power in the arme, therefore by a figure, the arme ſignifieth *ſtrength, might, of power*; and to ſay, *they cry out by reaſon of the arme of the mighty*, is as much as to ſay, they cry out by reaſon of the *power of the mighty*. The arme is frequently in Scripture put for *power*; the powerful wrath of God is called *the arme of God*. The Prophet (*Iſa. 30. 30.*) ſpeaks of the *lighting down of his arme*. When the Lord lets his arme fall, or light down upon a man, a family, or a Nation, in wrath, it cruſheth either or all of them to pieces. And as the powerful wrath, ſo the powerful grace of God is called *his arme*, (*Iſa. 53. 1.*) *Who hath believed our report? to whom is the arme of the Lord revealed? That is, his mighty power, working by and manifeſting it ſelf in Chriſt, and in the miniſtery of the Goſpel, for the conviction, converſion, and ſalvation of ſinners.* Thus alſo the arme of man, is the power of man, (*Dan. 11. 6.*) *She ſhall not retain the power of the arme; neither ſhall he ſtand, nor his arme*: That is, his power ſhall fall, or both he and ſhe (*Bernire and Antiochus Theus*) ſhall fall and be powerleſs. (*Pſal. 37. 16.*) *The arme of the wicked (that is, their power) ſhall be broken, but the Lord upholdeth the righteous.* They cry out by reaſon of the arme

*Severiffimum
dei ſupplicium
immiſſum aut
deſcenſione Bra-
chii ſignifica-
tur.*

Of the mighty.

The ſame word which in the firſt part of the verſe is tranſlated *multitude*, is here tranſlated, *The mighty*. But what was the mightineſs of theſe men? There is a four-fold mightineſs, Firſt, there is mightineſs of body, that is natural might, and 'tis properly the might of the arme. Secondly, there is a mightineſs in valour and in Armes: Thus ſouldiers and warriors are mighty men; they who having courage in their hearts, have alſo weapons in their hands, and ſwords by their ſides, are the mighty. Such a one was *Gideon*, to whom the Angel ſaid, (*Judg. 6. 12.*) *The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour*. Thirdly, there is a mightineſs

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tiness of Authority: And thus the Magistrate is a mighty man; suppose he be weak in body, yet he is mighty in power, and can do great things. Fourthly, there is a mightiness of wealth and riches: Thus *Boaz* is called *a mighty man of wealth*, (Ruth 2. 14.) Riches have so much might in them, that in the Hebrew one word serves to signifie both *might* and *riches*. We may understand the mighty man here in any or all these four senses. *The oppressed cry out by reason of the arme of the mighty*. They who have much bodily strength, often oppress the weaker, and so do the mighty in Armes, and so do the mighty in Authority, and so the mighty in riches have often done, making the poor and the oppressed cry; *They cry out by reason of the arme of the mighty*.

From the former part of the verse; Observe.

Oppression is a common sin.

Not only was *Babylon* stained with it, but *Jerusalem*. That's an amazing passage (Jer. 6. 6.) *Thus hath the Lord of hosts said; hew ye down trees, and cast a Mount against Jerusalem. This is the City to be visited, she is wholly oppression in the midst of her*. Not only was *Jerusalem* a City, but, The City, a City above all Cities, to be visited by an oppressing enemy; and why? even because she not only had oppressors in her, but was oppression. O how oppressive was that City, which was oppression, and that not only in some parts of her, but *wholly*, and that not in her skirts and suburbs, but in the midst of her! The Lord, to shew that the *Jewes* were superlatively rebellious, or most rebellious against him, calleth them (in the abstract) *rebellion*, as the Margin hath it, (Ezek. 2. 7.) and to shew how superlatively oppressive they were one against another, He calls *Jerusalem oppression*. Here in the Text we have a *multitude of oppressions*, surely then, there were a multitude of oppressors. To heare of a multitude of sins of all sorts, is very sad, but when there is multitude of one sort, and that one of the worst sort, and such a sin as cannot go alone, but draws after it a heap of almost all sorts of sin: what a multitude of sins are there! It cannot be denied, but that oppression is a very common epidemical sin, if we take and consider it in the full latitude of it. For there is a two-fold oppression. First, there is a secret oppression. To deceive, defraud, or go beyond another, in the Apostles sense, is to oppress him. And thus 'tis said, (Hos. 12. 7.) *He is a Merchant,*
the

the balances of deceit are in his hand, he loveth to oppress. He doth not oppress by violence, with a sword in his hand, but by craft with balances in his hand; he oppresseth while he over-reacheth in dealing and trading. This sort of oppression runs up and down every where; and though this kind of oppression make not a great cry, yet it is a great sin, a crying sin. There is also a secret oppression under colour of Law; many turn the very Rules of Justice into rods of oppression: And this is by so much the worse, by how much it hath the better cover. Secondly, there is an open oppression, the *Nimrods* of the world, the mighty Hunters rare and vex and trouble all they can, and would make all tremble before them, or run from them, as the Hare and Hart from their merry, but merciless pursuers. Now if both secret and open oppressions are so commonly practised, oppression may justly beare the title of a common sin.

Secondly, Note.

Oppression is a very crying sin.

That cannot but be a crying sin, which makes so many cry. Oppression then is a crying sin. First, as to the nature of it: Secondly, as to the effect of it. Oppression cryeth, and it makes those cry who are oppressed. *Solomon* saith, (*Eccles. 7. 7.*) *Oppression maketh a wise man mad.* That which puts a man even out of his wits, or besides the right use of his reason, will put him much to the use of his tongue, causing him to complain, cry out, and clamour. But who are they that are most given to, and deepest drencht in this sin of oppression? The Text answers, *They cry out by reason of the arme of the mighty.*

Hence note, Thirdly.

Power is commonly abused to oppression.

We read indeed of a poor man oppressing the poor, (*Pro. 28. 3.*) And *Solomon* tells us, that such a mans oppression is the sorest oppression; for he compares it (in the same verse) to a *sweeping raine, which leaveth no food.* They who have nothing, will take all when they can come by it, and get it. If all men in power should be as hard to their inferiors, as some are who have little or no power, there were no living in the world. Necessity may drive the poor to be more oppressive, than Ability draws the

rich. 'Tis a sad encounter when the poor contend with the poor; The necessity of the one knows no mercy, and the imbecility of the other, can give him no help. Nothing hardens the heart so much as want or hunger, (*Lam. 4. 10.*) They have little or no sense of anothers misery, who are under the extream smart, and feel the biting of their own. But though poor men oppress forest, yet they oppress seldomest and fewest. They can oppress none, but such as are poorer or weaker than themselves, and cannot do that often. There must be an over-matching power in all who oppress; and usually, they who oppress, are great and mighty in power. (*Psal. 52. 1.*) *Why boastest thou thy self in mischief, O mighty man?* The man was mighty, and what did this might serve him for? what use did he put it to? even to do mischief. Many have a mind and will enough to do mischief, who want both power and opportunity to do it. But they who have power and opportunity to do mischief, seldome want a mind or will to do it. Power is of great use to do good, and 'tis a great temptation to do bad things. As *Laban* bragg'd to *Jacob*, and crowed over him as his underling (*Gen. 31. 29.*) *It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt*; And what hindred him then, or what hath hindred many in all Ages of the world, from doing that hurt to others, which they had power to do? Not a dislike or abhorrence of the fact (which through grace stops every good man from hurting others, how great soever his power is) but a secret restraint upon their heart, like that, which *Laban* had in a dream, or vision to his eare; *Take heed thou speak not to Jacob good or bad*; that is, meddle not with him in any case to stop his journey. The Prophet (*Ezek. 22. 6.*) describing the sinfulness of those times, saith; *Behold the Princes of Israel, every one were in thee, to their power, to shed blood.* They did it, *to their power*; we put in the Margin, *To their arms*; That is, they used and improved their arme or power to the utmost length and stretch for the oppression of others. The Prophet *Jeremie* chargeth that people with sinning in general at that rate, (*Chap. 3. 5.*) *Behold thou hast spoken and done evill things, as thou couldest.* Some men sin (as all men should love and serve God) with all their might, with all their strength; they do evil with both hands greedily; that they sin no more, is not for want of will, but ability. As the people were thus set upon all manner of sin, so the Princes upon that special sin oppression. They were to
their

their power, for shedding blood; yea many desire to get power into their hand, that they may avenge themselves by their own hand, and be ready to hurt whom and where they do not love.

'Tis not so much ambition which provokes some men to affect power and greatness, as malice and a desire of having their ends upon whomsoever stands in their way. These like the great Fishes of the Sea, delight to swallow up and feed upon the lesser; or like the great and strong Beasts of the Forrest, they tare and devour the Lambs or Sheep of the pasture. They use (that is, indeed abuse) their power, not so much for their own good, as in wronging their neighbours, whose hurt they should never seek, and whose good they ought to seek and promote next their own. Power should be used and put forth, for help, not hurt, for protection, not ruine; and therefore Magistrates, who are the chief mighty men of the earth, who are called *Powers*, (Tit. 3. 1.) are also called *the Shields of the earth*; implying, they are to use their power for the defence (a Shield is for defence) of the oppressed, not to oppress. The Scripture calls Magistrates *Shields*, but it never calls the Magistrate a *Sword*. It saith indeed the Magistrate hath a sword, and that he beareth not the sword in vaine, (Rom. 13. 4.) that is, he doth not bear it so as to bear with evil doers, and never draw it, nor use it. But the Scripture doth not say, the Magistrate is a *Sword*, as it saith, he is a *Shield*; hereby intimating, that the Power of the Magistrate should rather be exercised in protecting than in punishing, rather in saving than destroying. What the Apostle saith concerning the designe or purpose of his ministerial office, *We have this power to edification, and not to destruction*, (2 Cor. 13. 10.) is true of all power; the primary designe of it is for protection, rather than for destruction, and not at all for oppression or vexation. Magistrates have Swords, but they are Shields, not Swords; they have a Sword to cut off evil doers, and by that the good are preserved and defended. Such mighty ones, who delight to be Swords, but care not to be Shields, who are all for cutting and destroying, not at all for saving, relieving, and protecting, (such mighty ones, I say) caused the oppressed to cry, yea to cry out in *Jobs* time; and in what times soever they are, they make the oppressed cry out. And the matter, that *Elihu* supposed *Job* was offended at, was, that God did not hear the cry of these oppressed ones, nor ap-

*Paratiives ad
nocendum.*

pear

pear for their deliverance; which yet he hath declared himself ready to, as David afterward describeth him, (Psa. 12. 5.) *For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise (saith the Lord) I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.* But Job hearing this cry of the oppressed, or crying out of his own oppression, and God seeming not to regard it, was stumbled at the matter. To remove this, *Elihu* answers in the next verse.

Vers. 10. *But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night?*

There is a two-fold Exposition of these words, arising from a doubt about the Antecedent to *none*, or who is meant by those that say not, *Where is God my maker?* Who are those?

The first Interpretation gives it to the oppressors, to the mighty men before spoken of; *They make the oppressed to cry by reason of the multitude of oppressions;* but none of these mighty oppressors say, *Where is God my maker, that giveth songs in the night?* Thus the verse is translated quite through, with respect to wicked oppressors, who cast God out of their thoughts, never saying, *Where is God my maker, who hath set me up, who hath given me this power, and given me songs, (that is, occasions of joy) in the night? The wicked have abundance, they can feast it and sing it day and night, yet mind not God the fountain and bestower of all.* This is a truth in it self; and because the interpretation is insisted upon by some as the truth intended in the present Text,

Take this Note from it.

Oppressors put away the thoughts of God, or mind not God, when they do, or are about to do, mischief.

They make the oppressed cry, but they say not, *Where is God?* They neither speak nor think of God, who hath cloathed them with power, and made their arme mighty. We finde this frame frequently ascribed in Scripture to oppressors; *Elihu* chargeth Job with it, (Chap. 22d) where having told him to his face, of many acts of oppression; *Thou hast stripped the naked of their clothing, (v. 6.) Thou hast withholden bread from the hungry, (v. 7.) And the armes of the fatherless have been broken, (v. 9.)* Having (I say) reckoned up these his supposed oppressions, he concludes,

cludes, (v. 13.) *And thou sayest, How doth God know? can he judge through the dark Cloud?* David in prayer, speaks the same of his oppressors, (Psal. 86. 14.) *O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul, and have not set thee before them.* (Psal. 94. 3, 6.) *They break in pieces O Lord thy people, and afflict thine heritage; They slay the widow, and the stranger, and murder the fatherless: Yet they say, the Lord doth not see it, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.* All these Scriptures may be resolved into the Text; *They say not, Where is God my maker?* They who do all they can to unmake and undo their fellow-creatures, care not to remember him, who is the maker and creator of us all. But

Secondly, I conceive, those words, *None saith, Where is God my maker?* are rather to be referred to the oppressed, than to the oppressors: The oppressed cry indeed, but not unto God their maker. As Job said, (Job 24. 12.) *Men groan from out of the City, and the soul of the wounded cryeth out, yet God layeth it not to heart;* so here Elihu saith, *men groan and cry, yet themselves lay not God to heart;* *None saith, Where is God my maker?* Thus our translation seems to carry it, and thus 'tis most generally understood; *None of the oppressed say, &c.*

Taking this sense, Elihu here begins to assigne the reason why the oppressed are not delivered. As if he had said, 'Tis true, there are a multitude of pressures and oppressions, and they transport all manner of men with passion; the oppressed cry, they make much ado, when they suffer, against them, under whom they suffer: But few or none are so wise, in such a case, as to recollect themselves, and make serious application to God, putting him in mind of his own gracious nature towards the work of his hands, to have mercy upon it, and in faith to seek to him for remedy and comfort, as being only able to relieve and glad the heart in great extremities; they look not to the hand of God, *when they cry out by reason of the arme of the mighty:* they only toyle and teare themselves with complaints, they cry out of this and that man, of this and that instrument; but, alas, they find neither redress nor deliverance, because they say not, *Where is God my maker?* That is, they are more forward to complain of wrong done them by men, than to remember what good, or what favours God hath done them; They do not particularly and specially apply them-

selves.

Non habet cogitationem de liberationem, propositum querendi deum, neque agnitionem estimationemque beneficiorum ejus sunt aduersarij. Coc:

selves to God in their trouble, they do not seek nor enquire early after God, nor humble themselves before him, or under his mighty hand, neither do they consider what God is to them, nor whether he be with them, and in them; and if they find not God near them, nor in them, they consider not how they may be united to him, or get him near them. We find God, when we heare his voyce speaking to us by his Word and Spirit, and hearken to his voyce; **we find God when we are at peace with him, trust upon him confidently, and rejoyce in him comfortably.** The oppressed considered not these things.

None saith.

Here is an universal Negative, *none*; that is, not so much as one; yet we may understand it with an allay, *none*, that is, few or none (as we commonly speak) say, *Where is God my maker?* Possibly many say it with their mouths, but few or none say it; either first, heartily; or secondly, spiritually; or thirdly, humbly; or fourthly, repentingly; or fifthly, believably; or sixthly, submittingly; and therefore no wonder, if they are not heard and helped when they cry. It is a common thing for men in distress, or under oppression, to cry out, *O God, O Lord*, The name of God is taken by many in vaine, when any thing afflicts or hurts them; but few call upon his name. It is no easie matter to cry out, in deed, *O God my maker*, or to say with a serious holy and gracious frame of spirit, *Where is God my maker?*

There is a twofold understanding of these words.

Sunt verba optantis.

First, Some look upon them, as an earnest wish or prayer for help; *None saith, Where is God my maker?* That is, *none saith, O that God my maker would appear in the present manifestations of his power to succour and deliver me.* In which sense *Elisha* is conceived to speak when he smote the waters with *Elijahs* Mantle, (2 Kings 2. 14.) And said, *Where is the Lord God of Elijah?* As if he had said, *O thou God of Elijah come, shew thy glorious power, and divide these waters.*

Sunt verba gratulantis.

Secondly, Others expound them as an expression of praise, or as the words of a man looking up to God in thankfulness for former benefits, in present straights, ***Where is God my maker? Where's he that made me, and hath preserved me hitherto?*** As if *Elisha* had said, *none of these oppressed ones have recourse to God* in

in the day of their calamity, confeſſing and acknowledging his great goodneſs to them in their creation and further preſervation, which might much comfort and encourage their hearts under preſent grievances and preſſures; None ſaith, *Where is God my maker?*

The word *maker*, may be taken in a threefold notion; Firſt, for him that hath given us our being. As God is the maker of heaven and of earth, ſo he is our maker, (*Gen. 1. 26, 27.*) Secondly, for him that hath continued us in and preſerved our being; for providence is a renewed creation. Thirdly, for him who hath raiſed us up, or preferred us, and done us good all our dayes. In which ſenſe the word is uſed (*1 Sam. 12. 6.*) And Samuel ſaid unto the people, it is the Lord that advanced Moſes and Aaron. We put in the Margin, *made Moſes, &c.* it is this word, he made them great, and put them in thoſe high places of Government and Truſt. The Lord is he that maketh men in this ſenſe. We ſay commonly of a man that is advanced to ſome great place, *He is a made man*; and on the contrary, of a man that is thrown down, *He is an undone man*. God giveth us a being, and a bodily fabrick, he protects us in our being, he advanceth us to a wel-being, in all we may call him, and call upon him as our Maker. And when men would unmake us, that is, oppreſs and undo us, then we ſhould ſay in faith, *Where is God our maker?* who once gave us life, and hath ſince liſted us up from the gates of death, and put us into a good condition. Many are crying out upon, and poſſibly, ſome railing and raging at men, but who ſaith (in the ſenſe opened) *Where is God my maker?*

There is one thing further conſiderable in the Grammar of the Text. The Hebrew is plural, or a plural with a ſingular; as (*Gen. 1. 1.*) *In the beginning God created*: The word *Elohim*, rendred God, is plural; The word *Bara*, created, ſingular. Thus here, *Where is God my makers?* Mr Broughton tranſlates, *Where is the puiſſant my makers*. I might ſpend much time in ſhewing the conſent of ſeveral Scriptures in that poynt. *Joſhua ſaid to the people*, (who promiſed and engaged to ſerve the Lord) *ye cannot ſerve the Lord*. Why could they not? the reaſon follows; *For he is an Holy God*, (*Joſh. 24. 19.*) The Hebrew ſtrictly is, *God holyes he*. Thus the Prophet expreſſeth it, (*Iſa. 54. 5.*) *Thy makers. is thy husband*. *Solomons* admonition runs in the ſame plural ſtile, (*Ecc. 12. 1.*)

K

Remem-

Eloah nomen ſingularis uſu participium plurale. Poſſe- ves mei; ſic uſu obtrinit: de deo loquuntur pro- miſe modo ſingulariter modo plurali- tur. Senſus au- tem ubiq; ſin- gularis eſt.

Ideo nomen אלהים E'lo- him quando de vero deo divi- tur interpretes reddunt ſemper deus, ubi ratio habetur ſenſu, non terminatio- ni. Druf: vid: Merc: Ubi eſt deus qui fecerunt me. Heb: כרא אלהים אלהים קדשים הוה

*Deus sanctus
est.
Ad verbum.
Dii sancti ipse.
Mont:*

Remember now thy Creators in the dayes of thy youth. But though the Scripture speaks of God sometimes in the singular, sometimes in the plural number, yet the sense is alwayes singular. The true God being but *One*, and the onemost one, and therefore the plural word (*Elohim*) is alwayes rendred in the singular number *God*, where mention is made of the true God; they having regard to the true meaning or Divinity of the Text, not to the Grammar, or termination of the word. There are usually two reasons given by learned translators and interpreters, why the true God who is but one in essence and being, is so often expressed in the Hebrew text plurally. First, to insinuate or intimate unto us that Great and glorious mystery of the Blessed Trinity of persons in the Godhead; I say, to intimate it, we cannot make a full or convincing proof from it against any Antitrinitarian Adversary; because though the word *Elohim* notes a plurality, yet we cannot by any force of the word, determine that plurality precisely to a Trinity, that must be done by other Scriptures, of which we have an abundant store to stop the mouth of all gainlayers. Secondly, they tell us, This plural word is used to set forth the honour of God, according to the usage of Kings and Sovereigne Princes (called Gods) who speak of themselves (though single persons) in a plural stile, *We* and *Us*. But I conceive, neither is this cogent, though both this and the former may be piously improved. So much for the opening of these words, *No man saith, Where is God my maker?*

Hence observe.

First, *Many cry and complain in affliction, but look not to God in affliction.*

(Deut. 32. 18.) *Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindfull, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.* Which as it is often verified in times of peace, plenty, and prosperity, so not seldome in times of trouble, pressure, and affliction. Yea, there are some who cry and complain in affliction, yet run away from God in affliction, (Hos. 7. 14.) *They have not cryed unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds; they assemble themselves for corne and wine, and they rebell against me.* These are so far from seeking God indeed, or saying, *Where is our maker*, with their heart, that they rebell against him, while they would be relieved and sed by him. How frequently, even at this day, do some men
forme

storme, and fret, and rage, little minding God in their afflictions, though formally or vocally calling on him. 'Tis easie to complain, but hard to pray in a day of trouble. The *Jewes* are reprov'd for their regardlessness of God, while they made great preparations in a time of danger and war, or of a feared siege, (*Isa. 22. 8, &c.*) *Thou didst look in that day to the armour of the house of the forrest; ye have seen also the breaches of the City of David, that they are many, &c. And the houses have ye broken down to fortifie the wall: Ye made also a ditch between the two walls for the water of the old pool, &c.* Here were politick warlike preparations, yet God was little thought upon in all this; as it followeth, (*v. 11.*) *But ye have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had respect unto him that fashioned it long ago.* 'Tis thus with the most of men; when outward misery comes upon them, what crying? what working is there? yet little returning to God, little turning into their own hearts.

Secondly, Note.

When men oppress and vex us, it is best to have our recourse to God, and apply to him.

That counsel, *Look to me and be saved,* (*Isa. 45. 22.*) is true of temporal as well as of eternal salvation. God is our best friend at all times, even in the best times, and it is best to look to him in the worst times. David could say, (*Psal. 73. 28.*) when flesh, and strength, and heart, when all fayled him; *It is good for me to draw near to God.* Let our condition be what it will, but especially if we are in a bad condition, it is good, yea best to go to him who hath our times, that is, all the changes of our condition in his hand, to him, in whose hand the arme of the mighty is, and in whose hand alone there is might to help and deliver us from the arme of the mighty. Is it not best to look to him in affliction, who can either support us in, or bring us out of our affliction as pleaseth him? He that made us can protect and save us; therefore in every pinching strait, in every pressing danger, let us go to God in faith and hope, and he will either give us enlargements, or do us good by and in our worst and greatest straits.

Thirdly, Note.

As it is good, when at any time we are in trouble to look to God, so we should then look to God, specially under this relation, as he is our Maker.

It is good then to say, God is my maker, and I am the work of his hands, therefore he will take care of me, and deliver me out of the hand of my oppressors. There are five duties which arise from this Consideration, that God is our Maker. First, We should highly esteem and be thankfull for this benefit, our making. Secondly, We should be confident that he who hath made us will preserve us. Thirdly, We should patiently submit to him, when he afflicteth us himself, or suffers others to afflict us. Fourthly, We should give him glory, by believing that he will take care of us in, or deliver us out of all our sufferings and afflictions. Fifthly, We should not think nor speak hardly of God, because he hath made us subject to tryals, and the exercise of patience; neither should we take it ill, that he hath made others so high or great, that they have power to oppress us. In all these respects, we should look to God our maker, and neither murmur at, **nor be afraid in a day of affliction.** The Lord himself poynts us to that, (*Isa. 51. 12, 13.*) *Who art thou that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall dye, and of the son of man which shall be made as grasse, and forgettest the Lord thy maker?* It is good in time of affliction to remember God in all our relations, and in this, as our maker, in a three-fold making of us. First, **As our maker in a natural capacity,** that is, as he hath made these bodies of ours; we may plead with and urge the Lord to take care of and preserve our bodies, because he hath made them; preservation is an act of providence, and providence followeth creation. Secondly, **As our maker in a civil capacity,** that is, as he hath made us rich or poor, high or low in the world, or in any worldly enjoyments. *Pharach* that great Dragon, lying in the midst of the rivers, said, (*Ezek. 29. 3.*) *My river is mine own, and I have made it for my self.* But grace teacheth us to say otherwise; if we are rich or strong, God hath made us so; if our river be broad and deep, full and over-flowing, God hath made it so; and if we are poor, and weak, if our river be narrow and shallow, empty and dry, God hath made it so; and who shall say to him, Why hast thou made it so? That God is the maker of our crosse, should make us quiet under it. Thirdly, **A godly man should look to God in affliction, as his maker in a spiritual capacity;** I do not mean as he hath made our spirits, but as he hath made us spiritual, or as we are his *workmanship*, (that's the Apostles word) *created in Christ Je-*

us unto good works, (Eph. 2. 10.) That we are thus wrought,
 works much upon the heart of God in the day of our affliction.
 That God hath made us men, that we are his creatures, is a good
 argument, a faire plea, and moves much; but that he hath made
 us new men, or new creatures, his Sons by grace, and Temples of
 his Spirit, that he hath made us holy, believing, righteous, is a
 far stronger argument, a fuller plea, and moves much more. A
 soul that can go to God thus, and tell him he is his maker; a soul
 that can say, (as 'tis said of the Church, *Isa. 54. 5.*) *My maker*
is my husband; He that made me, hath married me to himself;
 a soul that can say this, may indeed triumph in and over all his
 tribulations. *How sweet is it to have an interest in Christ, and by*
him a relation to God as our maker in this respect. When the
 Lord rejects a people to the utmost, he saith he will not be stayd,
 no not by this relation as their maker, from doing it, (*Isa. 27. 11.*)
This is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them will
not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them
no favour. As if the Prophet had said, If any argument could
 move the Lord to shew mercy, this would do it, to tell him, *he*
hath made such a people, or, he is their maker. But there are none
 whom the Lord hath made in the third sense, as to a new creati-
 on, but he will have mercy on them, and shew them favour; his
 making of them such, is a greater mercy and an higher favour, than
 any they can ask of him; nor are there any of that making, who are
 of no understanding. So then, *he that is made of God spiritually,*
needs not care for all the unmaking or undoing he can receive
from men, nor fear that he shall ever be unmade or unmercied
by God. All he can lose in this world, doth not, cannot make him
 miserable, who is made fit for the world to come: He knoweth
 he hath an estate settled upon him by his Maker, which cannot be
 taken away. A man thus made, may say to his spoylers, Ye have
 taken nothing from me but the scraps and sweepings, the parings
 and chippings of my estate: The Archers indeed have sorely grie-
 ved me, and shot at me, but my bow abides in strength, and the
 armes of my hands are made strong by the hands of the mighty
 God of *Jacob.* He that is spiritually made, or made a new crea-
 ture, is made for ever, and in every strait he may look to God
 his Maker, as a helper and restorer. *He that made us when we*
were nothing, can help us when we are reduced to a very no-
thing.

thing. It is an encouragement to go to God for healing, because he hath wounded us; *Come, and let us return unto the Lord,* (saith the Church) *for he hath torne, and he will heale us, he hath smitten, and he will bind us up,* (Hos. 6. 1.) Much more is it an encouragement to go unto God to be our healer, because he hath been our Maker. He that hath made us, can mend us; He that built us, can repaire us, if we say, as we ought, and have been taught, *Where is God our maker?*

Who giveth songs in the night.

Those words contain a second Consideration, why the oppressed should seek to God; he giveth songs, that is, matter of songs, or cause of singing, joy and comfort, even in the night. There are several opinions about the meaning of these words. Some (as I shewed before) interpret this verie of the oppressors; *None (of them) say, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night?* So the words are a description, as of the great worldly security, so of the great worldly felicity of those oppressors. Poor men labour all day hard, and being wearied out with their labours, when night cometh they go to bed; But prophane great and rich men, idle away the day, and sport and play and sing away the night. As good men have holy songs in the night, (Isa. 30. 29.) *Ye shall have a song as in the night, when a holy Solemnity is kept, &c.* So the wicked have their wanton, vaine, revelling songs in the night, when their sensual Solemnities are kept. *Belshazer* was drinking in the night, and doubtless, he had his musick & songs that night: And as he had his songs, mirth, and musick in the night, so he said not *Where is God my maker, who giveth me songs in the night.* he instead of minding God his maker in his mirth, minded only the gods which himself had made (as the text speaks, Dan. 5. 4.) *They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and of silver, &c.* And thus 'tis in proportion with all the wicked to whom God gives songs in the night, they say not, *Where is God my maker?* This interpretation which carrieth the songs to the oppressors before spoken of, contains a truth, yet I shall not stay upon it, but take the words as referring to the oppressed.

Here it may be queried, how doth God give them songs in the night? I shall not insist upon those conjectures, which some have made about this *giving songs in the night.* As First, implying God
so

ſo gracious, that he giveth us not only in the day, but in the night, occaſion of joy in ſorrow, namely, the view and contemplation of the Heavens and Starrs, which are very pleaſant and reſreſhing, (*Pſal. 19. 1.*)

Others, Secondly, conjecture, that God may be ſaid to give the ſorrowful and oppreſſed ones ſongs in the night, by the ſinging of birds in the night, of that bird eſpecially which hath its name from ſinging in the night, *the Nightingale*. Some inſiſt much upon theſe interpretations. It is, I grant, a great mercy of God that when the Sun is down, we have Moon-light and Star-light, and that in the night we have the innocent harmleſs birds to ſing and make us pleaſant melody. But leaving theſe, we may take the words in a double notion; Firſt, Properly; Secondly, Metaphorically.

Properly, and ſo to give ſongs in the night, as the night is taken for night time, imports the goodneſs of God to man, not only in the day time, but in the night.

Hence Note.

God in the night ſeaſon, as well as in the day, gives his people matter of joy.

Night-mercies deſerve and call for day-praiſes; eſpecially two ſorts of night-mercies; Firſt, Night preſervations, (*Pſal. 3. 6.*) *I laid me down and ſlept, for thou Lord makeſt me to dwell in ſafety.*

The night is ſubject to many dangers; The Septuagint render *Qui diſtribuit* fully to this ſenſe; *Who giveth watch or preſervation in the night; nocturnas cu-* that's matter of praiſe and thankſgiving to God. Secondly, he *ſtodias. Sept:* gives us cauſe of praiſe and ſinging, not only for preſerving our lives while we ſleep in the night, but for reſreſhing us with ſleep in the night, (*Pſal. 127. 2.*) *So he giveth his beloved ſleep.* The Lord gives us not only ſafety, but ſleep. Sweet ſleep is a great mercy, (*Eccleſ. 5. 12.*) *The ſleep of a labouring man is ſweet, whether he eat little or much;* and they who ſleep ſweetly get reſreſhing and renewings of ſtrength after all their former labours, for new labours. So that, if we take night properly for the night time, there is much occaſion of rejoycing given by God to mankind in general, and more peculiarly to his faithfull ſervants, in reference to theſe common mercies of bodily ſafety, and the return of natural ſtrength and ſpirits.

Secondly,

Etiam cum mul-
tis ad eum lau-
dandum docu-
mentis circum-
fulgens, in eo
Spiritus excitat
ad laudes.
Juni

Secondly, Take night properly; and then this assertion, He giveth songs in the night, may have this meaning; The Lord gives his people a praising frame of heart in the night season! When they are wrapped up and compassed about with outward darkness, when they are solitary and alone, when no worldly object holds out any occasion of comfort to them, yet then the Lord lets in a light, or shines into their souls by his good Spirit. The Lord may well be said to give songs even in the night, when by the imme-
diate work of his Spirit, he filleth our spirits with joyes un-
speakable and glorious. These are the most ravishing songs of the night.

Hence Note.

God by his good Spirit doth often suggest sweet meditations and comfortable thoughts to his people in the night.

In the night the Lord minds his servants either of such mercies as they have already received, or of such, as according to his promise, he is ready to, or will surely bestow, that so they may be busied in that heavenly work of praising him, and rejoycing in him, when they awake or cannot sleep. This was *David's* experience, (*Psal. 17. 3.*) Thou hast visited me in the night. Men use to visit us in the day when we are up or awake. But (saith *David*) God gives me visits in the night, when I am in bed he gives me many a song, or makes me to rejoyce. When we are in our retirements, or freest from the hurry of worldly buisnesses and enjoyments, then we are in the fittest posture for the entertainment and enjoyment of God. The Lord visits his servants in the night, not only (as *David* there) to try them, or as elsewhere to instruct them, but to comfort them, as *David* was assured, (*Psal. 42. 8.*) The Lord will command his loving kindness in the day time, and in the night his song shall be with me. That is, a song concerning him. I will sing and rejoyce, even in the night time, because of the goodness and kindness of God to me in the day. The experience of *Asaph*, or of *David*, communicated in that Psalm to *Asaph*, gives further proof of this, (*Psal. 77. 6.*) where having said, (*v. 1.*) I cryed unto God with my voyce, and he gave care unto me: he adds, (*v. 6.*) I call to remembrance my song in the night: that is, those occasions of joy and singing which God hath heretofore given me: These songs were sweeter

to me than sleep. As it sheweth an excellent frame of spirit to remember the Commandments of God in the night, which David also professed as his practise, (*Psal. 119. 55.*) *I have remembered thy Name, O Lord, in the night, and have kept thy Law.* The name of God is any manifestation of God, either in his word or works. And again, (*Psal. 119. 62.*) *At midnight I will rise to give thanks to thee, because of thy righteous judgements.* Some watch in the night to give thanks, (*Psal. 134. 1.*) others give thanks when they wake at any time in the night; both are acts of purest love to God, and proceed from purest consolation in God. (*Cant. 3. 1.*) *By night on my bed I sought him.* The Spouse doth not say only, *by night I sought him*, but *by night on my bed*, I spend not the night in sleeping, but in seeking him whom my soul loveth. (*Psal. 16. 7.*) *My reins instruct me in the night season*; That is, I have as it were discourses and soliloquies, secret debates about, and strong desires after the things of God, even in the night. *That soul is indeed awake to God, which is acquainted with and used to these divine songs in the night, the time of sleep.*

Further, Take the word *night* in a metaphorical notion, as night signifieth a troublesome state; God may be said *to give songs in the night*, when he comforts us in or at any time of affliction. I need not stay to prove that in Scripture the night is put for affliction, nor need I prove, that, *to give inward joy in a day of outward sorrow, is to give songs in the night.* The observation rising from this metaphorical understanding of night, is this, which the Scripture and experience are full of.

God sends comfort to his people, or causeth them to rejoice in the midst of their afflictions.

It is the Apostles description of God, (*2 Cor. 1. 3, 4.*) *The God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation.* What sweet songs have suffering Saints found in the darkest midnight of their affliction! What inward peace in outward troubles! What soul freedom in bodily restraint! One of the Ancients hath put the question, and answered it. *What's a song in the night?* 'Tis joy in time of trouble. Whenever God gives a soul joy in time of trouble, he gives a song in the night. Paul and Sylas sang in the night, in both notions of night. If we take night in a proper sense, they sang in the night, and in an improper sense, they

*Carmen in no-
dest letitia
in tribulatione.*
Greg:

were in prison, that was a night of affliction to them, yea it was midnight with them, the power of darkness, or the darkeſt outward affliction to them, yet, ſaith the Text, *At midnight Paul and Syſas ſang* : They had ſongs in their mouths, and in their hearts too ; they ſang ſo loud that all heard them. And hence we may collect the ſtrength of the argument or reaſon upon which *Elihu* here ſaith, God doth not regard the cry of many under oppreſſion, they make a noiſe, but none ſaith, *Where is God my maker, who giveth ſongs in the night*, who is able to comfort us in all our afflictions, who is able to make darkneſs light to us, and turn our ſorrows into ſongs of joy ; they had not theſe high thoughts of God, nor theſe holy confidences in God, while they lay under the oppreſſions of men, and therefore God did not regard their cry, nor ſave them from the arme of the mighty. This is the firſt part of the answer which *Elihu* made to *Job's* complaint, that the oppreſſed were not delivered, though being preſſed ſo ſorely they could not forbear to cry, yea to cry out in their miſery. The next words give us a fuller and more expreſſe answer to that complaint.

Vers. 11. *Who teacheth us more than the beaſts of the earth, and maketh us wiſer than the fowles of heaven.*

Vers. 12. *There they cry (but none giveth answer) becauſe of the pride of evil men.*

Vers. 13. *Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.*

Elihu proceeds in aſſigning a ſecond reaſon to highten their ſin, who being in diſtreſſe, ſay not, *Where is God my maker* ? or he giveth a further account, why the Lord doth not preſently attend to the prayers and crys of ſome men under great oppreſſion. He had ſhewed in the former verſe one reaſon of the Lords forbearance to help them in ſuch diſtreſſes, they did not ſay heartily, *Where is God my maker* ? nor did they remember him according to the ſpecial benefits which they ſometimes had received from God, even ſongs in the night.

In this 11th verſe, *Elihu* aggravates the ſin of ſuch oppreſſed perſons by the conſideration of that light, & underſtanding wherewith God hath indued, and enriched man above the irrational creatures,
and

and which he hath therefore furniſhed man with, that he might know what to do in a time of diſtreſs, in the day of affliction; *they ſay not, Where is God my maker?*

Who, not only gives us ſongs in the night, (matter of praiſe, but) teacheth us more than the beaſts of the earth.

Some of the Jewiſh Interpreters read theſe words poſitively, not (as we) comparatively, or they render them, to ſhew that God hath appoynted the very beaſts to be our Tutors, not (as we) that himſelf tutors us beyond the beaſts: Thus; *Who teacheth us by the beaſts of the earth, and maketh us wiſe by the fowls of heaven.* This answers what Job ſpoke in the 12th Chapter of this book. (v. 7.) *Ask now the beaſts, and they ſhall teach thee: and the fowls of the air, and they ſhall tell thee.* 'Tis a truth that God doth teach us by the beaſts of the earth, and makes us wiſe by the very fowls of the air. We may learn much in the School of thoſe creatures who have not only no learning, but no underſtanding, and may be ſtirred up to the exerciſe of excellent virtues, by thoſe which have not the exerciſe of reaſon. The Scripture ſendeth man, the higheſt of viſible creatures, to the loweſt of viſible creatures, to creatures ſo little, that they are ſcarce viſible, for inſtruction; *Go to the Ant ſhoun ſluggard, conſider her wayes, and be wiſe, (Pro. 6. 6.)* There are ſeveral obſervable qualities, and, as I may call them, virtues, not only in the beaſts of the earth, and fowls of the air, but in the meaneſt creeping things, which are very imitable by man; and thus God doth teach us by the beaſts of the earth, and by the fowls of the air, virtually, though not formally, by their practice and example, though not by their precepts or rules; for ſuch teachings neither the beaſts of the earth nor the fowls of the air have any competency at all. Man alone cannot teach man effectually to converſion and ſalvation; all that are ſo taught, are and muſt be taught of God, (1 Cor. 3. 5, 6, 7.) yet the beaſts of the earth, and the fowls of the air, may and do teach us inſtrumentally to conviction, and if we learn not by them, their teachings (as rude as they are) will be to our ſhame, confuſion, and condemnation.

But I rather take the words, as we tranſlate them, comparatively; *Who teacheth us more than the beaſt of the earth:* As if he had ſaid, *God teacheth the beaſt ſomewhat, but he teacheth man much more.*

Quidem He-
braeorum speci-
aliter eo refe-
rum, ut bestia-
rum aut avium
more invicem
rapiamur.
Merc.

They who expound this context of the wicked man, who oppresseth the poor, give the sense thus; *God teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven*; that is, he teacheth us that we should not like beasts, vex, tear and rend one the other, that we should not like the Bear of the Wood, and the Lyon of the Forrest, nor like the Vultures and ravenous Birds of the air, prey one upon another; They who are fierce against, and unmerciful to their brethren, degenerate into beasts, whom God hath taught no better, but left them to live by rapine and spoyle: Whereas he hath laid more noble principles into the heart of man, and taught him to be kind & charitable, loving, and compassionate, not to devour and vex those of his kind, how much soever inferior and below him in degree. And therefore what a shame is it for men to be more oppressive and cruel to men like themselves, than beasts are to beasts, or fowls to fowls. This is a truth: yet I conceive the context is rather to be understood of the oppressed, (as hath been touched before) than of the oppressor, and therefore our reading runs most clearly;

Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth.

VER in lat
discere in pie
docere signifi-
cat. Deum nos
magis famili-
aritute & con-
suetudine dig-
natur, quam
bestias.

That is, though the very beasts of the earth, are taught somewhat by God, and have a kind of knowledge, yet men are taught of God in a more eminent, transcendent, and noble way, than they, whether wild, or tame, one or other. God doth not set up such a School for beasts, as he doth for man, nor provide such instructions for them, as he doth for man; He gives men more means of instruction, he gives them more time for instruction, he takes (as I may say) more paines to instruct them, rising early, and sending his Ministers now, as the Prophets of old, to reach his people. He every way *teacheth us more than he teacheth the beasts of the earth*;

And maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven.

But what? Are the fowls of the air indued with wisdom? I answer, First, *wisdom is put sometime for that inbred subtlety, which is no more than an inclination to avoyd that which is hurtful to nature, and to follow that which is suivable to it.* That which is wisdom indeed is the proper and peculiar gift of God to men and Angels only. God hath given somewhat like wisdom to the fowls

fowls of heaven, they have a natural forecast; But what is the wisdom, with which the fowls of heaven are indued, to that wisdom with which man is indued, those men especially, who (through grace) are heires of heaven? What is the wisdom which beasts have by a common instinct, to the wisdom which man hath by divine instruction, yea sometimes by divine inspiration. Beasts and birds are wise, they are taught by God what is convenient for their state, yet the best of their knowledge is ignorance, and the top of their understanding folly, compared with man. And hence it is that when men act foolishly or uncomely, they are said in Scripture to be like beasts, to corrupt themselves like brute beasts, to be brutish in their knowledge. We may easily conclude the wisdom of birds and beasts extreemly below mans, seeing whensoever man acts below himself, or doth any thing unwisely, he is said to be and do like a beast. The Hebrew word which we translate *wiser*, being applyed in Scripture to Emets or Ants, to Conies, to Locusts, to Spiders, (Pro. 30. 24.) doth not imply, that they truly know either what or why they do such or such a work, it only sheweth that the work which they do, hath an order, usefulness, and reason in it, according to knowledge. Solomon saith indeed, those foure little creatures are exceeding wise, not that they exceed the wisdom of man, but among brutes they exceed, or are among them of the first forme for wisdom. *He maketh us wiser than the fowls of the air.*

Hence observe, First,

The beasts of the earth, and fowls of the air, have a kind of knowledge, and wisdom;

They have somewhat which is Analogous to or like knowledge and wisdom, yet neither knowledge nor wisdom strictly taken. Some of the Ancients have reported to us, the opinion of the Manichees, and Marcionites, who maintained, that the beasts of the earth, and fowls of the air, were indued with reason, properly so called; which opinion was by them justly numbred among heresies, and indeed a little reason may serve for the refutation of that opinion, which asserts beasts and fowls indued with reason; Though some other learned men in their time, and Great Philosophers have asserted as much as the Manichees or Marcionites in this poynt. *Quintilian* said, that beasts did rather want an ability,

De formicis, caniculis, locustis, araneis dicitur: non quod scient quid et cur agant, sed quod ipsum opus habeat ordinem utilitatem & rationem.

Cocq

Augustinus lib. 6. c. niva Faustum Manicheum. Epiph: lib. 1. Har: 42.

lity of speaking, than of understanding: And *Plutarch* endeavoureth to prove the same in his Dialogue about that Question, *Whether brute Beasts have or are endued with Reason?* But we affirm the wisdom of Brutes is only brutish, and at most, but similitudinary to the rational actions of man & a similitude of, or somewhat like wisdom and reason cannot with reason be denied them. It's said of the Serpent (*Gen. 3. 1.*) that he *was more subtil than any Beast of the field, which the Lord God had made.* And when Christ saith, (*Math. 10. 16.*) *Be ye as wise as Serpents,* he implyeth, according to that in *Genesis*, that Serpents have some shadow of wisdom, somewhat like wisdom. And when the Prophet *Jeremiah* (*Chap. 8. 7.*) saith, *The Stork, the Turtle, the Crane, and the Swallow, know the time of their coming,* he affirms that those Fowls have a kind of knowledge. Another Prophet upbraids men with the Knowledge of Beasts, (*Isa. 1. 3.*) *The Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Masters Crib, but, &c.* Here in the Text, to learn or be taught is ascribed to Beasts, because they are tamed, broken, brought to hand, and made useful for the service of man. And wisdom is ascribed to the Fowls of the Air, because they keep their seasons duly, make their Nests safely and fitly, and bring up their young ones tenderly, with pains and diligence. There are very strange instances, scarce credible, given by *Pliny* and others, concerning the sagacity and docibility of some Beasts of the earth, and Fowls of the Air; we are told how they have acted more like rational creatures, than brutes: And daily experience gives proof enough, that they have a kind of knowledge, reason and wisdom, only we cannot allow them reason, wisdom, or knowledge in kind: They do works of Reason and Understanding, only (which is mans excellency) they understand not the reason of their works.

Secondly, Note;

The knowledge or wisdom (such as it is) that the Beasts of the Earth, and Fowls of the Air have, is of God.

If he teacheth men more than the Beasts of the earth, and maketh them wiser than the Fowls of the Air, then in some way and measure he teacheth them, and maketh them wise. That wisdom and knowledge, whatsoever it is, which Beasts and Fowls have, is planted in them by God; they have that which serves their
turn,

turn, and answers their state, by a common instinct of nature, which man hath answerable to his state, either by immediate Revelation, or by means of instruction from God. So then, Beasts and Birds receive their peculiar qualities and abilities from God, as well as their Being: And God hath bestowed those qualities, which are shadows of wisdom and understanding, upon Beasts and Birds, not only for their own preservation, but for the benefit of man, that they may be more useful to him, and fitter for his service. As God hath made both Man and Beast for himself, so he hath made the Beasts of the Earth, and Fowls of the Air for Man, either to serve mans necessity, or to procure his honest delight: And that they might reach both these ends, he hath furnished them accordingly. A creature which hath not somewhat in it like Reason, could be little made use of by the Reason of Man,

Thirdly, Note;

Man is far better taught, than either the Beasts of the Earth, or Fowls of the Air.

Man, as Man, hath that in him, which wonderfully exceeds the Beasts of the Earth and Fowls of the Air; he hath Reason in him, which they have not; he is a reasonable creature, which they are not, and so can do that which they cannot. Man, by the power of Reason is able, first, to propose to himself an end in what he doth; secondly, to chuse fit means for the attaining of that end; neither of which Beasts can do. And if any man be without wisdom to propose to himself a right end, and to chuse due means leading thereunto, there's little difference between that man and a beast, surely all his wisdom is but brutish. Further, God hath not only given Man a sense of those things which are hurtful to him, as he hath to the Beasts of the Earth and Fowls of the Air; but God hath given Man an Understanding, by which, he knowing God, may worship him, by which also he may see into and foresee the causes of things, and likewise rightly apply known means, either to prevent or remedy evils, and to bring about that which is good. Again, as God hath bestowed that wonderful blessing of Reason upon Man, above Beasts and Fowls, which makes him capable of higher instructions and fruitions, than either of them; so God hath provided higher and better means for the instruction of Man, than he hath for the instruction of Beasts. *He teacheth us more.* For,

First,

First, He hath given his Word to Man, not to Beasts; he hath not made a Bible for the Beast of the Earth, and the Fowls of the Air; but for Man he hath, that he might both know his will and do it, know his favour or good will to him, and enjoy it. Secondly, He hath given some men his Spirit, he hath not bestowed his Spirit upon any Beasts, nor upon any Fowls of the Air: and because his Spirit teacheth us, we are said to be taught of God, eminently taught of God. Thirdly, he hath given us his Ordinances, and appointed Officers, or set persons in Office, to mannage and hold out those Ordinances, wherein himself is both honoured and enjoyed. He (saith the Apostle, Eph. 4. 11, 12.) gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers; for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, for the bringing in, and building up of souls. He sheweth his Word unto Jacob, his Statutes and Judgments unto Israel, (Psal. 147. 19.) and as it follows in the next verse of the same Psalm, He hath not dealt so with any Nation, as with his Israel, his Church, to be sure he hath not dealt so with the Beasts of the Earth, nor with the Fowls of the Air, as was shewed also in opening the Text.

Further as to the matter in question about the Providences and dealings of God with man; God hath taught Man much more than Beasts: As First, That all things which befall us, come from, and are ordered by himself. Secondly, That we ought to receive the Rule and take instruction from God, how to behave our selves under his various dealings. Thirdly, He hath taught us at all times, and in all turns of Providence, to stay our selves in waiting upon him, (Psal. 37. 7.) Fourthly, He hath taught us in times of trouble and affliction, to cry to him, and call upon him as his children in faith, not barely to complain, much less to be impatiently outrageous like Beasts.

Now if God hath taught us more than the Beasts, then, we should not live by sense, nor pursue sensible things, as Beasts do, but aspire to and seek after union and communion with God, whom the beasts of the earth know not. How greatly will this aggravate the sin of man, if having been taught more than beasts, any man should be found to have learned less than beasts; as will appear yet more in the next observation but one.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, *Elihu* at least intimates this Note ;

Men sometimes act but as, or indeed below, the very beasts of the earth, and the fowls of the air.

For (saith he) they say not, *Where is God our maker, who gives us songs in the night? who teacheth us better, or more, than the beasts of the earth.* As if he had said, The beasts of the earth answer the instinct of nature, (which is all the cost God bestows in teaching them) better than men do those costly teachings and instructions which God bestows upon them by his Word, by his Spirit, by his Ministers, by his Ordinances, and by his Providences; for all these wayes doth the Lord teach and instruct men from day to day; yet men often act, not only beside and below, but quite contrary to all these teachings. The beasts of the earth keep up to the instruction which they have received, the instinct of nature, they move according to that; but man who hath an understanding, doth not alwayes move suitably to his understanding; man hath reason, yet he doth not alwayes regulate his motions by reason, but is hurried by passion, or led by sense, as a beast. (Psal 49. 20.) *Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish;* that is, though his state and speare be higher than a beast, yet he moves by as low a principle as a beast, even by sense, or sensual appetite, either irascible, or concupiscible, as a beast doth. By the man in honour, that understandeth not, the Psalmist intends not a fool that hath no understanding, nor an Idiot that hath no use of reason, but he is said not to understand, because he doth not use his understanding; as he in the Parable that did not use his Talent, is said to have none, (Mat. 25. 29.) *Understanding is a Talent, and a great one, a choyce one too.* A man that hath the greatest natural understanding and reason, yea possibly the greatest learning, and experience, may be said, *not to understand,* when he doth not behave himself understandingly, or according to the Lawes and Rules of reason. Men of the best understanding and greatest honour are like the beasts that perish, as to their frailty, that is, they dye; which may be the meaning of the Psalmist at the 12th verse, where he saith, *Man being in honour abideth not, he is like the beasts that perish.* But all men that are in honour and understand not their duty, or do not what they understand, are like the beasts that perish, as to their

*In extremam
stultitiam meam
invidimus, si sa-
pientiores nos
eo putamus, qui
sapientes nos
facit.*

inability, that is, they live as if they had nothing, but (what beasts have) sense and appetite to govern their lives by. He that doth not practise according to knowledge what he knows, is like, and worse than a beast that hath no knowledge. For when a beast doth any thing absurdly, he doth like a beast; but when man doth any thing absurdly, he degenerates or falleth from his own forme, he doth not like a man, and the more is worse than a beast. And that's it, I conceive, which the Apostle Jude aims at in the 10th verse of his Epistle, where rebuking a very vile generation of men, *Re-vilers, who speak evil of those things which they know not*; he presently adds, *But what they know naturally as brute-beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.* When he saith, *what they know naturally as brute-beasts*, his meaning is, what they know in common with beasts, that is, by sense and appetite, which are common to man and beast, (as reason and understanding are common to Man and Angel:) Now (saith the Apostle) *what they know naturally as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves*, which brute beasts do not. For these words, *as brute beasts*, are to be taken in construction and interpretation, with the former part of the sentence, *what they know naturally*, not with the latter, *they corrupt themselves*. Their knowledge indeed is no better than the knowledge of brute beasts, natural, but in corrupting themselves they are unlike to, and do worse than brute beasts, who run not to such excesses; yet there is nothing more common in Scripture, than to say that men act the beast, when they sin, and put off those manners which become and are worthy of an ingenuous and rational man. For as man is partaker both of a spiritual and sensitive nature, so he takes his denomination from that part to which in his disposition and conversation he most inclines: Hence he is sometimes called *God*, or an *Angel of God*, and sometimes he is compared to the most hurtful of beasts, a *Lion*, sometimes to the worst of beasts, to a *Fox*, to a *Wolfe*, to a *Dog*, to a *Swine*, to a generation of *Vipers*, to what not, which may put a mark of dishonour and reproach upon him.

Fifthly, Note;

It's a great shame, reproof, and reproach to man, when he acts unanswerably to the teachings of God.

It is better to be a beast in or by nature, than to be a beast (and
continue

continue so) in qualities and conditions. O what a reproach is it, that they who have a far better nature than beasts, should lead no better lives than a beast, yea possibly much worse! The Psalmist crys shame upon such (*Psal. 32. 9.*) *Be ye not as the Horse, or as the Mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.* The Horse and Mule are unruly creatures, if left to their own rule, they have no understanding how to manage and order themselves; they must be managed and order'd by bit and bridle in the hand of a skillful rider, else they do more hurt than good service to those that come near them: Now, saith the Lord to man, Be not you like the untaught or unmannag'd Horse and Mule; as ye are better taught, so ye should have better manners. We say of some men, they are better fed than taught; and we may say of many men, they are better taught than manner'd; they mend not their manners, though daily taught, yea urged to mend them. For this neglect the Lord reproves the sluggard, (*Pro. 6. 6.*) *Go to the Ant thou sluggard, consider her wayes, and be wise; thou doest not answer natural, much less Scriptural light, thou doest not learn by any teachings; one of the least of my creatures may teach thee more than thou hast yet learned of all the teachers which I have sent thee.* The little Ant that dwels upon a Mole-hil, that creeps upon the ground, may teach thee better manners, and make thee wiser. Art thou not ashamed to need such a teacher, having had so many teachers? That's also the sense of those rebukes which the Prophet powres out (with a strong contestation) upon the people of *Israel*, calling Heaven and Earth to witness against them, (*Isa. 1. 2.*) *Hear O Heavens, and give ear O Earth, I have nourished, and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.* But how doth the Lord convict them of rebellion, and by whom? even by the teachableness and tractableness of the dullest brutes, *The Ox knoweth his owner, and the Ass his Masters crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.* As if he had said; The Ox, and the Ass out-do you, the Ox knoweth his owner that feeds him, and the very Ass knows the crib where he is fed. These beasts take notice of, regard and submit to their Master and Benefactor: but *Israel* doth neither observe nor submit to me, who have tenderly nursed and plentifully nourished them; who have (as the Lord spake by his Prophet, *Hos. 11. 4.*) *been to*

them, as one that taketh the yoke off their jawes, and layeth them meat, the fat and the sweet, the finest of the wheat, and honey out of the Rock to feed upon; and, which is more than this, who have not only fed them better, but taught them better than the Ox or Ass; O ye Heavens, be astonished at this! Further, as in this Scripture the Lord contended with, and reproveth his people by the beasts of the earth, so he doth it in another by the fowls of the air, (*Jer. 8. 6, 7.*) *I (saith the Lord) hearkned and heard, but they spake not aright, &c. every one turned to his course, (his sinful course, or his course in sin) as the Horse rusheth into the battle;* that is, fiercely, fearlessly, presumptuously, at once slighting, at least forgetting, both their own danger, and my command. As the Lord thus rebukes the head-strong obstinacy and wilfulness of that people, by their likeness to the Horse; so in the next verse he reproves their blindness and blockishness, by their unlikeness to the Stork, &c. *Yea the Stork in the Heaven knoweth her appointed time, and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow observe the time of their coming, but my people know not the Judgements of the Lord.* Then followeth, (*v. 8.*) *How do ye say, we are wise, and the Law of the Lord is with us; Lo certainly in vaine made he it, the pen of the Scribe is in vaine:* As if he had said; You have been taught, you have had the Law of the Lord, and you are ready to boast of it, as the Apostle observed (*Rom. 2. 23.*) but with what face can ye take it upon your selves to be wise men, or arrogate wisdom to your selves, or so much as own the Law, when you are so unready to pay that obedience which you owe to it. The Crane, the Turtle, and Swallow, the very fowls of Heaven, follow the light of nature better than you have done the light of Scripture and daily instruction. These reasonless creatures, reason with themselves more rationally than you have done; They say thus in themselves, It is best for us to change our quarters, and take our flight to some more benigne or milder region, for here the season grows sharp, and the weather tempestuous, if we abide here we starve, we perish with cold and hunger: But you my people are so sottish, that you change neither your minds nor manners, you mend neither your wayes nor your works; what changes soever I bring upon you, or how much soever I vary my wayes and workings towards you, you apply not your selves to my course and dealings with you, but still take your own course,

say

say I or do I what I will; you neither embrace seasons of grace and offers of mercy, nor do ye labour either to prevent or to avoid those storms of wrath and divine vengeance, with which you have been often threatened, and which hang in the clouds ready to drop down and overwhelm you. And will ye say after all this, *we are wise*, when the fowls of the air appear wiser than you? And will you say, *the Law of the Lord is with us*, when they guide themselves better by the Law of nature? And forasmuch as it is thus with you, have I not reason to conclude, that, *Lo, certainly in vaine made he it, the pen of the Scribe is in vaine*; that is, it was to little or no purpose that God at first enacted and published his Law, (*Exod. 20.*) or appointed Scribes to write it out, that Copies of it might be transferred to and read by his people, (*Deut. 17. 18. Chap. 31. 9.*) Is not both the making and writing of the Law vaine, (as to you) seeing you are thus vaine and foolish, even much more vaine and foolish than the Stock in the Heaven, than the Turtle, Crane, and Swallow, notwithstanding the making and writing out of the Law for you?

This will fill the faces of the wicked, that is, both of the prophane and formal professors of the Lords name, with shame and confusion for ever, when they shall be made to see and confesse, that the beasts of the earth have followed their light, better than they, though God hath taught them more than the beasts of the earth; and that the fowls of the air have carried themselves more wisely than they, though God hath made them wiser than the fowls of the air.

Vers. 12. *There they cry (but none giveth answer) because of the pride of evil men.*

When *Elihu* had thus closely hinted the sin of those persons that acted below beasts and birds in their afflictions, he proceeds to tell us, what they do in their affliction; *There they cry (but none giveth answer.)* We translate these words, *But none giveth answer*, in a parenthesis; we may read the verse without it, and transerre those words to the end of the verse, *There they cry, because of the pride of evil men, but none giveth answer.* That is, (as some give the meaning) they being oppressed by the pride of evil men, cry out of their insolencies, and their own miseries, and yet can get no answer; for the reasons given in the two for-

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מִן רֵעִים

A faciebus superbiae malorum. Mont: Propter superbiam miliorum. Pagn: Ibi vel tunc. Adverbis loci pro adverbis temporis passim sumuntur. Merc:

mer verses, that is, because they do not heartily and believingly apply themselves to God their Maker. Mr Broughton understands it thus of the pride of oppressors; *There* (saith he) *they cry*, but he answers not concerning the wrong-doers pride. Others take it for the pride of the oppressed; *There they cry*. The word rendered *there*, is an Adverb of place, but here it notes the time or estate rather in which these persons lived; they were in an oppressed estate or condition, when they cried, yet saith the Text, *None giveth answer*; that is, they have no help when they cry; they cry to men, yea they cry to God for help, but have none, help is far from them. God doth not answer them immediately by himself, neither doth he send them answer by the hand of any other. Now, what is the reason of this? The Text gives it partly (yet somewhat obscurely) in this verse, more fully and clearly in the verse following. The reason given here is their pride, *Because of the pride of evil men*; that is, because themselves are so proud, they are at once poor and proud, humbled but not humble; they are oppressed and subdued under the power of men, yet their pride remains unsubdued and in full power; they are laid low in estate, but they are not lowly in spirit: proud men oppress them, and they, though oppressed, are still proud; their hearts are not brought down, though they are come down wonderfully, as the Prophet spake of the captivated Jewes, Lam. 1. 9. They are fallen before men in misery, but they are not fallen before God in humility; they cry of wrong, but themselves are not right, and that's the reason why they are not righted; *There they cry* (but none giveth answer) *because of the pride of evil men*. This also is a good sense, and may yeild us profitable instruction; I leave the Reader to his choyce, both being safe and usefull. *There they cry, &c.*

Note hence.

First, *They that are oppressed, and brought low, will be crying and complaining,*

Both God and Men shall hear of them: *There they cry*. An afflicted condition, is a complaining condition; Nature being pinch't will speak. *I* (said Job, Chap. 7. 11.) *will not reframe my mouth, I will speak in the anguish of my heart, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. I mourn in my complaint,* said David, (Psal.

(*Psal. 55. 2.*) The title of the 102^d Psalm runs thus; *A prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before God.*

Note;

Secondly, *Some in their afflictions do nothing but cry, nothing but complain.*

Elihu doth not say, There they repent, and there they humble themselves, and there they turn to God, but *there they cry*; that they are troubled is the all, the only thing that troubles them. 'Tis said before, *God teacheth man more than the beasts of the Earth*; but many in a day of affliction, do no more than the Beasts of the Earth. A Beast, when hurt, will cry, he will rage and roare; and that's as much as many men do when they are hurt, though God hath taught them more, many lessons more, which they should be practising under sorrowful dispensations. The Ox loweth, and is taught no more, when he wants fodder; the Ass brayeth, and is taught no more, when he wants grasse; but man is taught to act repentance, and faith, and patience, and submission to the will of God in want. How sad is it when we hear nothing but flesh cry in man, or when nothing is cryed for by man but flesh, that is, the supplies of Nature, in the day of his distress. As 'tis said of those (*Hosea 7. 14.*) *They have not cryed unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds; they assemble themselves for corn, and for wine, and they rebel against me.* How miserable are they in their miseries, whose tongues cry to God, but not their hearts, or their hearts being silent; who cry for corne and wine, not for grace and repentance, or not for grace to repent; who cry much because they suffer evil, but not at all because they have done evil, yea who are doing evil at the very time when they are crying out because of the evils which they suffer: Such was the wretched frame of those in the Prophet; *They assembled themselves for corne and for wine, and rebelled against God.* 'Tis bad enough, when there is crying, and nothing but crying, this is to cry but as beasts cry; but to cry and rebel against God, is to be worse than beasts, for beasts do not rebel against God when they are pinched with want, and cry. It is sad to be in afflictions; to be put to cry in afflictions is more sad; only to cry for the affliction is yet more sad, when nothing comes

comes from a man but a cry, there is nothing in the cryer, but what is meerly of man; but to be found sinning against God, while we are crying out in our affliction is most sad, that's the saddest and worst condition of man in affliction. The Lord teacheth his people better, let us shew our selves better taught, than only to cry in our afflictions; and let it be the abhorrence of our souls for ever to sin at all, much more to sin up to rebellion against God in our affliction, that it should be said of any of us as of that wicked King *Abaz*, (*2 Chron. 28. 22.*) that in the time of any distress, we have trespassed more against the Lord.

Thirdly, Whereas those oppressed ones cryed, yet (according to the second interpretation) continued proud and naught.

Observe,

The greatest oppression and worldly trouble, cannot break the power of sin, nor bring down the proud heart of man.

Neither oppression from man, nor affliction from God, can break the pride of mans spirit. These were oppressed, yet proud still. Our estates may be broken, our relations broken, our comforts broken, yet our hearts remain unbroken. The oppressed are many times, as proud as their oppressors, and they who are unjustly dealt with, are as bad as they that deale unjustly with them. Oppressors (though not all who oppress) are alwayes bad, and the oppressed are many times so too, even as bad as their oppressors. There is no proof of any mans grace or goodness by this, that he is oppressed, or wronged; for he may be wronged, and ground to powder with oppression, yet his heart as hard as a nether Millstone, and his spirit as high, and as much lifted up as *Lucifers*. There is nothing in affliction, trouble, or oppression, that can humble the heart of man; the Spirit of God, God himself must do it. Outward changes work no inward change; we may be emptied from vessel to vessel, from one condition to another, yet have our sin-sent remaining in us. It was, indeed, said of *Moab*, (*Jer. 48. 11.*) *He hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity*, (that is, he hath not been troubled much in his own Land, nor carried into strange Lands, as *Israel* hath been) *therefore his tast remained in him, and his sent is not changed*; that is, as he still retains his civil state and strength, so his spiritual vanity, impiety, and impurity, even as Wines that have

have not been drawn off the Lees, and put into other Cask, (to that the Scripture there alludes) retain their first tast and sent or smel, and are not meliorated or made more fit for the palat and stomach of those that drink them. Now (I say) as many for want of changes or afflictions, are not mended, so some mend not though they have many changes and afflictions; nor can any thing or affliction mend us, or work a change of heart and life in us, unlesse grace work with it.

Fourthly, Whereas it is said, *they cry, but none giveth answer,* God doth not hear and answer them;

Note;

The crys of proud, or bad men, how much soever they are oppressed, do not move God, nor will he answer them.

There is no reason he should answer their cry, (though they have reason enough to cry) who will not answer his call, his command; let such cry and cry, tear the air, and rend their throats with crying, they shall not be answered. *Job* saith of the hypocrite, (*Chap. 27. 9.*) *Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?* No, he will not. *Solomon* leaves the contemners of wisdoms counsel under the same doom, (*Pro. 1. 28.*) *Then shall they call, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.* But when was this. Then in which they called, and the Lord would not answer? The 27th verse tells us, The *when* or time of this rejection, it was when they had most need of hearing and acceptation, even when their feare (that is, the thing feared, or at least which made them afraid) came upon them, as desolation, and *their destruction as a whirlwind*; when those sad Messengers came they sought God *early*, that is, earnestly and diligently, but could not find him: But what was the reason of this refusal? *They hated knowledge, and did not chuse the fear of the Lord,* (*v. 29.*) They had been wicked, and nought, before trouble came, and when trouble was come they were no better, therefore the Lord regarded not either their persons or their cryes. The Lord (saith the Apostle preaching to the *Athenians*, *Acts 17. 27.*) *is not far from every one of us*; yet 'tis said (*Pro. 15. 29.*) *The Lord is far from the wicked, but he heareth the prayer of the righteous*: He is far, that is, far from hearing and answering, far from helping and relieving the wicked when they pray. The

N

Lord

Lord is not far from any of us as men, for in him we live, move, and have our being, (v. 28.) and he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things, for the support of life and natural being; but he is far from all proud men, as to any complacency in their persons, and as to the hearing of their prayers. He is far from hearing them, and he knows them a far off, (Psal. 138. 6.) that is, he deals with them as with men at a distance. Thus the Lord told the impenitents among his own people by the Prophet, (Isa. 1. 15.) *Though you make many prayers, I will not hear, for your hands are full of blood.* Ye are full of bloody sins, and ye have not humbled your selves, nor cleansed your hearts and hands by the blood of the Covenant to this day; and being in that case, you may cry and pray till your hearts ake, and your tongues ake too, yet no prevailing with God, no grant, no hearing. Another Prophet tells them as sad newes from the Lord, (Jer. 11. 11.) *Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape, (or, go forth of) and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken to them.* Though the Lord threatned, *I will bring such evil upon them, that they shall not escape*; they might say, well, but when the evil hath taken hold of us, we hope God will hear us, and deliver us. No, saith God, when the evil hath overtaken and arrested you, yet your prayers shall not overtake me; *Though you cry, yet I will not hearken unto you.* That's a dreadful Scripture of the same import, (Psal. 18. 41.) *They cryed, but there was none to save them: even unto the Lord, but he answered them not.* They cryed being in great distresse, and they cryed to the Lord; he brings in that, lest any should say, they cryed indeed, but possibly 'twas to false gods, to idols, possibly they knockt at a wrong doore, and so were not heard: No, they cryed to the Lord, to the Lord by name; they were right as to the object of prayer, but their hearts were not right; they were not right subjects of prayer. That once blind man saw this truth, when answering the Pharisees about the person by whose power he received his sight, he told them plainly, (Job. 9. 31.) *We know that God heareth not sinners*; that is, *Such as love and live in sin, such as go on impenitently in their sins.* By this answer he closely, but strongly confuted that blasphemous opinion and censure of the Pharisees, who reputed and reported the Lord Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners, as one of the vilest sinners in the world, and upon that account

got him crucified at laſt. As if the man had ſaid, Were he that cured me of my blindneſs ſuch a ſinner as you reckon him to be, he could never have obtained power from God to cure me of my blindneſs, *for we know God heareth not ſinners.* When men ſin and pray as it were by turns, their prayers are turned into ſin, and therefore will not be returned in mercy. God ſometimes hears ſinners in wrath and judgement, and he ſometimes will not hear Saints, as to the grant of the thing in hand prayed for, in love and mercy; but he never denies praying Saints in wrath, nor doth he ever hear a ſinner (ſuch a one as is here intended) in mercy when he prayeth.

Now, as when the Diſciples heard Chriſts answer to the Phariſees queſtion about Divorce, they preſently ſaid, (*Math. 19. 10.*) *If the caſe of the man be ſo with his wife, it is not good to marry;* ſo ſome hearing this doctrine, that God heareth not proud ſinners when they cry or pray, may poſſibly ſay, if the caſe of the proud be thus with God, it is not good for them to pray at all. To ſuch I answer, *this doctrine is not urged to make proud or impenitent ſinners to leave praying, but to leave their pride, 'tis urged to make them humble under their oppreſſions and afflictions, not to make them prophane.* They who (as they are) cannot get by prayer, certainly they cannot get by caſting off prayer. What answer can they have who cry not at all to God, when ſome may cry and get no answer! as *Elihu* here ſpeaks, *There they cry, but none giveth answer, becauſe of the pride of wicked men.* This ſenſe or interpretation moſt inſiſted upon in this 12th verſe, will appear more full and faire in opening the 13th in which *Elihu* brings down what he ſaid here into a ſtrong and peremptory concluſion; or the next verſe renders another reaſon why God would not relieve thoſe oppreſſed ones, It was not only for the pride of their ſpirits, (v. 12.) but alſo for the emprineſs and heartleſſneſs of their prayers; or becauſe the prayers of proud and evil men are heartleſs or empty.

Ad diſti ſuperiorum confirmationem Epi. phanemum vi. e. ſubject.

Verſ. 13. *Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.*

They cry, but God will not hear: why will he not hear? what hinders? He tells us both why and what.

N 2

Surely

Surely God will not hear vanity.

Non temeritas, falsitas, mendacium; dicitur de re falsa vana, levi & inutili.

What is vanity? What saith vanity? hath vanity a tongue? can vanity speak? the Text saith, *God will not hear vanity.* 'Tis frequent in Scripture, to ascribe a tongue, and a voyce to sin of any kind; though some sins are more vocall, and speak louder than others, yet all speak. But when he saith, *Surely*, (or, without all Question) *the Lord will not hear vanity*, by *vanity* we are to understand vaine men praying; or *vanity* is put for the prayers and crys of those persons who are as vaine as vanity it self. The word rendred *vanity*, signifieth a *lie*, as also *rashness*, *temerity*; God will neither hear rash-headed, nor false-hearted prayers, he will not hear vaine prayers, or the prayers of vaine men. The Abstract is often put for the Concrete in Scripture, (*Psal. 107. 42.*) *All iniquity shall stop her mouth.* When the Lord brings about that mighty work, the bringing down of the mighty, & sets the poor on high, (those that are at once poor and humble the Lord will set on high), then *Iniquity*, that is, wicked men, men of iniquity, shall stop their mouths, or have their mouths stopr, they shall not have a word to say, as gaine-saying that righteous and glorious work of God. So here, *God will not hear vanity*, that is, vaine men, or men that pray vainly; all that, which men speak, or act, is vaine or vanity, if it be not good, if it be not answerable to the will and ends of God; yea whatsoever prayer doth not proceed from faith, and flow from a pure heart, is vanity, 'tis but straw, and stubble, dross, and dung. *God will not hear vanity,*

Neither will the Almighty regard it.

Non intendit oculos & visionem, intentus & fixus oculis

He that will not hear, will much less regard vanity. The sense is gradual, regarding is more than hearing, we may put both together, he will not hear with regard, nor regard what he hears from such. *The strong God*, who hath all power in his hand, the power of Authority, or the power of a Judge, will not hear vanity. *The All-mighty, The All-sufficient*, who hath all power of efficiency in his hand, the nourisher, and preserver, the punisher and correcter of all men; this *Shaddai* will not regard vanity, he will not give it a look with respect, no not one good look. The word signifies to fix, or set the eye with strong intention upon any thing or person. The Prophet *Elisha* spake to this sense, though he used another

another word, when he said to the King of Israel, (2 King. 5. 14.) *intuitus est, so-*
where it not that I regard the presence of the King of Judah, I would licite observa-
not look to thee, nor see thee. The Lord will not regard, he will not
 look to vanity, to the prayers of vaine men, he will as it were
 shut his eyes, he will not see though he doth see; *The Almighty*
will not regard it.

Hence Note;

First, *The prayers of vaine and evil persons, are vaine things.*

The Text doth not say, their oaths are vaine, and their lies are
 vaine, and their idle words are vaine, but their cry, their crys in
 prayer to God are vaine, yea vanity. *There may be vanity in the*
prayer of a good man, but his prayer is not vanity. That's a just re-
 proof upon the good works of many, which Christ gave the Angel
 of the Church of Sardis, (Rev. 3. 3.) *I have not found thy works*
perfect, or, I have not found thy works full. Though that Angel
 had done good works, and possible was full of good works, yet
 his works were not full. A man may be full of prayer, pray often,
 yet his prayer not full, his prayers may be empty, vaine prayers;
 that's a vaine thing which is an empty thing. How vaine are they
 whose best things are vanity! If the prayers of a man are vanity,
 then certainly all is vanity; and we may say of him in the whole
 bulke of all, he is *vanity of vanities, all is vanity.* When once God
 calls a mans prayer, and hearing, vanity; when he calls those works,
 which are good for the matter of them, vanity, then the man is
 indeed altogether vanity. You will say, when is prayer vanity,
 or a vaine thing? I shall answer it in a few particulars.

First, That prayer is vaine, or vanity, which is not put up in
 faith. *A faithless prayer is a fruitless prayer.* All the prayers of
 an unbeliever, or of him who is in a state of unbelieve are vaine;
 and the prayers of a believer, that is, who is in his state a belie-
 ver, are vaine, if he hath not faith about that thing for which he
 prayeth. Now if the prayer of a believer is vaine, when he hath
 not actual faith, then the prayer of an unbeliever must needs be
 vaine, who hath no habitual faith.

Secondly, All the prayers that are for our lusts, or when we
 resolve to continue in the practise of any lust, are vaine prayers.
 When we do not pray with a purpose to glorifie God, with what
 we shall obtain by prayer, but only to serve our own turns, and
 so

so bestow it upon our lusts, that's a vaine prayer, (*James 4. 3.*) Such praying is rather a mocking than a worshiping of God, a serving of our selves rather than a serving of God. How do they abuse God in prayer, who cry to him for help, whom they have no mind to honour? who would faine be heard of God, yet have no heart to hear God?

*Tales clamores
non fides. sed
malorum sensus
extorquet.*

Thirdly, That's a vaine prayer, when we pray meerly to get ease, or deliverance from an affliction, not at all minding our profiting by, or the improvement of an affliction. 'Tis not faith in God, but sense of our own smart, which moves to pray, when we rather look how to get off our burdens, than out of our sins, or to get out of the fire, than to get out our dross; when we pray more to have the plague taken away, than our hard and proud hearts, that is a vaine prayer; 'tis like the prayer of *Pharaoh*, who begged that he might be delivered; but it was the plague of God for his sin, for his hard heart, that troubled him; his hard heart, his sinning against God never troubled him. Pharaoh-like prayers, are vaine prayers.

Fourthly, Those prayers are vaine which we make in our own strength. What can those prayers be, which go forth in our strength, seeing we are told that we know not what to pray, much less then how to pray, but as the Spirit of God helpeth our infirmities, (*Rom. 8. 26.*) Unless the Spirit make intercession for us, that is, make our intercessions for us in our hearts, as Christ maketh intercession for us in heaven, we pray in vaine.

Fifthly, Those are vaine prayers, which we make in our own name, not in the name of Christ. And remember, though it be an easie matter to name Christ in prayer, yet 'tis no easie matter to pray in the name of Christ. 'Tis as common as that which is commonest, for all sorts of people, yea for children, to name Christ in prayer; but to pray in the name of Christ, is the peculiar work of the Spirit in the heart of a true believer. If the Reader desire to know more distinctly what it is to pray in the name of Christ, I refer him for some help towards it to the 17th verse of the 16th Chapter, where also the requisites of pure and powerful prayer, are more fully held out.

Sixthly, Angry passionate prayers are vaine prayers. The Lord loves zeal and much warmth of affection in prayer, but he cannot abide wrath, or any the least sparks of passion in prayer. The

Apostles

Apostles Rule is, (1 Tim. 3.8.) *I will that men pray every where, lifting up pure hands, without wrath, and without doubting. A peaceable heart is as necessary in prayer, as a pure hand.* When a soul coming to God in prayer, hath I know not what wrathful and angry disputes within himself against his Brethren, how can he look for a gracious acceptance with God? Will the Lord be pleased with us, while we nourish secret displeasure against our Neighbour? Now be sure when you go to God for mercy and favour, that ye carry no wrath in your spirits towards man, one or other; therefore Christ hath taught us in that most perfect model of prayer, which he hath left us, (when we ask the forgiveness of our own trespasses) *to forgive those that trespass against us.* We must lay down our unquiet thoughts of revenge, if we would have favour with, and compassion from God.

Seventhly, Those are vain prayers, which are not both formed and matter'd according to the Will of God; (1 John 5. 14.) which are not grounded upon a just cause, and which are not directed to a right end. Besides all these I may add *all cold Prayers, sleepy Prayers, slight-spirited or heartless Prayers, meer formal Prayers, tongue-wording Prayers, which are not soul-working and self-affecting Prayers, are, to them who pray so, but vain Prayers, or as the Text speaks, vanity.*

These Rules must be observed in all our prayer-addresses to God, else prayer is vain, or vanity; and when the prayer it self is vain, the person praying hath no hearing: *God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.* Consider that, *Elihu* doth not only say, God will not hear, but he adds, *neither will the Almighty regard it.* The doubling of the matter in higher Language intimates something to us; and we may note this from it;

As the Prayers of evil men are vain, so they have not any, the least regard from God:

He will neither hear, nor regard. *David* saith (*Psal. 66. 18.*) *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear my Prayer.* God will not hear a *David*, a good man, as to that particular prayer, if he regard iniquity in his heart, that is, if he hold any, the least compliance or secret correspondence with any sin, yea, if he hath not repented of, and laboured to mortifie every known sin: Doubtless then he will not regard the prayers of evil men,
when

when they pray also with an evil mind. And when this, and other Scriptures say, he doth neither hear nor regard them; there is more intended than expressed, even that he doth reject and abhor them, that they are a burden and an abomination to him. The Scripture is much in shewing how much God makes of holy prayers. For first, God hath not only promised to hear, but regard such prayers, (*Psal. 112. 17.*) *He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayers; that is, he highly prizeth and esteemeth them.* Secondly, The Scripture telleth us, God delighteth to hear such prayers, they are sweet to him, they are the best musick in his ears; *Let me hear thy voyce, for sweet is thy voyce* (her prayer-voyce he means chiefly) saith Christ to his Spouse, (*Cant. 2. 14.*) Thirdly, The Scripture assureth us, that God looks upon or reckoneth prayer as an honour done to him, 'tis an eminent part of worship, 'tis the giving of him glory; certainly therefore (take prayer purely) God doth regard it very much; he will have regard to that which he hath promised regard to, he will have regard to that which is sweet and delightful to him, which is an honour and brings glory to him; therefore there must needs be a great matter in it, when he saith, *He will not regard a prayer; such a prayer must needs be very vile, impure, and stark naught in it self, which he thus thrusteth from him, or cannot away with.*

It must be confessed, that God sometimes defers to hear (that is, to answer) the prayers of those that call upon him in faith, and even their prayers who call upon him humbly and sincerely. Holy prayers are not alwayes presently answered, but holy prayers are never unregarded, never rejected. 'Tis never said in Scripture, God doth not regard the prayers of a godly man. God may let him stay long for the answer of his prayer, to try his faith, and patience; but he will not slight his prayer. As it is the duty of all men to pray, and the desire or delight of a godly man, (when his heart is in a right frame) to pray, so it is the priviledge of every godly man, that his prayer is heard and regarded. And as it is the sin of most wicked men that they pray not at all, (*Psal. 14. 4. Jer. 10. 25.*) so it is the misery of all wicked men, that their prayers, though they make many and long prayers, are not heard, are not regarded. They are far from the grace and feare of God, who regard not to pray unto him; and they are as far from the mercy

mercy and favour of God, whoſe prayers are not regarded. And if a man be upon ſuch bad terms with God, that he is not regarded, when he is at his beſt work, his praying-work, O how little is ſuch a one regarded when he is at his worſt work, his ſinning-work! If ſome men are not regarded, when they are praying to God, what are they when they are ſwearing, and blaſpheming God, when they are cauſleſſy vexing or oppreſſing their brethren? If ſome men are not regarded when they are praying, what are they when they are revelling and reviling! The Lords indignation breaketh out to the utmoſt againſt wicked men, when he tells them, the beſt of their duties, their prayer, is vanity, and though they cry much to him, he will not hear nor regard them. *The Lord hath not ſaid to the ſeed of Jacob, ſeek ye me in vaine,* (Iſa. 45. 19.) that is, ye ſhall not ſeek me in vaine, no, as your prayers are honourable and acceptable unto me, ſo they ſhall be profitable and beneficial unto you; you that go forth weeping, bearing, and ſcattering this precious ſeed, ſhall doubtleſſ come again and bring your ſheaves with you, your prayers ſhall be returned with bleſſings upon your ſouls, upon your bodies, upon your eſtates, upon your families, in which you live, as alſo upon the Nations and upon the Churches among whom you live. Thus the ſeed of *Jacob* have found and ſhall further find by the bleſſed experiences of all theſe bleſſings, that God hath not ſaid to them, *Seek ye me in vaine.* He hath only ſaid of them who are vaine, your ſeekings of me are vaine in themſelves, and will be vaine, fruitleſſ, anſwerleſſ unto you; for *I the Lord will not hear vanity, neither will I the Almighty regard it.*

JOB, Chap. 35. Vers. 14.

Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, yet Judgement is before him, therefore trust thou in him.

*Multo minus si
dicar, non con-
templari istul
(exauditus
est) judica co-
ram eo & ex-
pecta eum.
Juni.*

There is a two-fold rendring or translation of this 14th verse ; First, Some connecting it with the former, and taking it in a dependance upon what *Elihu* had last affirmed concerning God, *He heareth not vanity, neither doth the Almighty regard it*, translate thus ; *Much less will he hear thee, if thou sayest thou dost not look to, or regard this ; judge thy self therefore before him, and waite for him.* As if *Elihu* should bring an argument from the less to the greater ; *God will not hear vanity, nor will the Almighty regard it, how much less will he hear thee, who sayest, (upon the matter) that thou regardest not him, or what he saith and doth.* That word, which in the close of the 13th verse, we render *regard*, is the same with that in this 14th verse, rendered, *see* ; as if the whole were a rebuke, or a conviction of *Job* for his stoutness, in not viewing and contemplating the power and prerogative of God as he ought, in laying his hand upon him ; and therefore saith *Elihu*, if God will not hear those that pray vainly, how much less will he regard thee, who seemest not to regard him ? that is, not to humble thy self before him as becomes thee to thy Sovereign Lord : And thereupon *Elihu* gives him counsel in the close of the verse ; *Judge thy self before him, and then waite for him, or trust him*, as we render it. Mr Broughton seems to speak in his translation much to this sense, giving it thus ; *So, when thou sayest thou wilt not mark it, judge before him, and waite for him.* As God will not regard vaine prayer, so when thou sayest to him, *thou wilt not mark it*, that is, attend to providences as thou oughtest, he will not regard thee. There is a truth in this, and the Original word may fairly bear this translation ; yet I shall not stay upon it ; but rather take this Context as the beginning of a new argument, than as the inforcement of the former ; understanding it so, the words have yet a reading different from ours.

Another modern translator disliking the former reading only in the first part of the verse, gives his own, thus ; *In this also (thou hast*

halt sinned) Those words are supplied to make up the sense, as being the bringing in of a further charge against Job) In this also (thou hast sinned) that thou hast said, thou shalt not see him; judge therefore thy self before him, and look for him. This is the matter of his new charge, Thou hast said, thou shalt not see him, this is thy sin. And having given him this charge, Elihu gives him counsel according to this translation in the close of the verse, Judge therefore thy self before him, and look for him. We say in our translation, Judgement is before him, that is, before God; this translation saith, Judge thy self before him; and the reason of it is because some take the word here as a Noun, others as a Verb of the Imperative mood; Judge thy self before him, and then look to him, or trust in him; that is, thou hast failed greatly, and sinned in taking up such a Conclusion as this, that thou shalt not see God, (the sense of which I shall open when I come to our own translation) therefore I advise thee to judge thy self thoroughly, and humbly to acknowledge thy fault. This translation is much insisted upon, and because it hath a profitable sense, I shall note two or three poynts from the latter part of the verse, where it differs from ours, and then proceed to our own Translation. Job being charged with sin for saying, that he should not see God, is here advised to judge himself, Judge thy self, and look to, or trust in him.

Etiam (in hoc peccasti) quod dixisti te non contemplantur eum; Judica (te) coram eo, et expecta eum.
Pisc:

Aliqui ידן pro nomine exponunt, Judicium alii pro ידן verba imperativi modi; Judica. Merc:

Hence Note;

It is our duty to judge our selves.

And 'tis a great Gospel duty: The Apostle gives it in plain words, (1 Cor. 11. 31.) *If we would judge our selves, we should not be judged of the Lord.* We are very apt to judge one another, but very backward to judge our selves. It is a great work to erect a Tribunal (as I may say) in our own Souls and Consciences, to sit in Judgement upon our selves; which that we may do, we must do these three things. First, we must send Summons to our selves, we must cite our selves to our own Tribunal; for alwayes before Judgement, Summons must go out and be sent to the party offending: Here we are to send Summons to our selves, that is, to call together all the powers of our souls to appear in this Judgement, and answer what is or may be alledged against us. And when we have Summoned our selves, then secondly, we are to

examine, search, and try our selves; (*Lam. 3. 41.*) *Let us search and try our wayes, and turn again unto the Lord.* Thirdly, having tryed and examined our selves, before we can come to Judgement (that Judgement which is here intended) *we must humble our selves under a Conviction of our own vileness and sinfulness, whether of our nature or of our actions, whether of our state or of our way; for whereas there are two parts of Judgement,* Absolution and Condemnation, we can never come to that part of Judgement, the judging of our selves, as persons worthy to be condemned by the Lord for our sins, unless we are first convinced of our sins. Now when we have summoned, examined, and convicted our selves, then we are ready to judge our selves, to judge our selves even with the judgement of condemnation, respecting what we have done, yet we should do it (with hopes of absolution) acting our faith upon the free grace and mercy of God through the satisfaction which Jesus Christ hath made for us.

Again, The scope of this counsel, or the reason why *Elihu* adviseth *Job* to judge himself, was to shew, that he had rashly judged of the wayes of God, because he had not duly judged himself.

Hence Note;

Self-judging, or judging our own doings, will preserve us from rash judging the doings and dealings of God with us.

We shall never think God deals harshly, or rigorously with us, if we do but enter into and pass a right judgement upon our own souls. As they that judge themselves shall not be judged of the Lord, (*1 Cor. 11. 31.*) so, they that judge themselves will never judge the Lord; no, they will acquit and justifie the Lord under all his proceedings, even in his sorest and severest ones. Thus did *Ezra* in reference to those great and unparallel'd sufferings of the *Jewes* in the *Babylonian* warr and captivity, (*Chap. 9. 13.*) *Thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve.* And so did *Daniel* (*Chap. 9. 7.*) *O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day.*

Further, *Elihu* concluded *Job* very much affected with, or highly conceited of himself, because he pleaded his own innocency or integrity so much, and was so desirous to come to a hearing, and have his matter tryed before God; and therefore saith he, *Judge thy self.*

Hence

Hence Note ;

Self-judging will keep us from proud or high thoughts of our selves, of our own wayes or works, how good soever they are.

Suppose our wayes and our works pure and good, as *Jobs* indeed were for the maine, (he was a man of the highest elevation in holiness and of greatest integrity) yet if we would thoroughly examine and judge our selves, consider our short comings in duty, our sinings against duty, and the sins that cleave to our best duties, we should find our very innocency to be guilty, and our righteousness to be unrighteous; and surely such a discovery would lay us very low in our own thoughts, and go very far towards the subduing of that pride of our hearts, which often ariseth from the contemplation of our own well-doing.

Lastly, Consider this counsel was given *Job* (according to this translation) with respect to that which follows ; *Judge thy self, and trust in or wait for him.*

Hence Note ;

We are never fit to trust, nor to wait upon God in any of his providences, till we judge our selves ; or, Judging of our selves will dispose and prepare our hearts for trusting and resting upon the power, goodness and mercy of God.

The more we judge and humble our selves, the readier hath God declared himself to help us in our extremities, (*1 Pet. 5. 6.*) we also are then the readier to trust and wait on him, both because we then see more clearly what need we have to trust on him for help, and may have the more assurance of his help, while we trust him.

I shall now proceed to our own translation, which fairly accommodates the scope of *Elihu's* dealing with *Job* in this place.

Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him.

Elihu had reprehended two of *Jobs* sayings before in this Chapter ; here he reprehends a third ; *Although thou sayest this, thou shalt not see him* ; although thou sayest it, either secretly in thy heart, (the fool saith in his heart there is no God) or although thou sayest it with thy mouth, and hast openly declared thy despayre of seeing him. Some passages in the discourse of *Job*

do more than intimate and imply, that he had said, *he should not see God.* And we may conceive that *Elihu* aimeth at that passage specially (*Chap. 23. 8, 9.*) where *Job* seems to say this thing; *Behold, I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.* Now, *Elihu* gives answer in this 14th verse, shewing, that although God would not give him a present hearing upon his importunate call for it, yet he might rest assured, that God would do him justice, and therefore adviseth him quietly to rest upon him. *Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, or canst not see him, yet Judgement is before him, therefore trust thou in him.* In that 23d Chapter, *Job* made a sad complaint, that though he much solicited and desired to see God (in what sense I shall open presently) yet he could not be admitted, he could not find him, nor come near him; *I (saith he) cannot perceive him, I cannot behold him, I cannot see him;* we have all these words negatively expressed there; as here, *Although thou sayest thou shalt not see, (or contemplate) him.*

There is a two-fold sight of God; First, immediate, or in himself; and thus God is seen only by himself, and of himself, to all others he is invisible, *No eye hath seen him, nor can see him, (1 Tim. 6. 16.)* The Lord told *Moses*, *No man can see my face and live;* that is, no man can see me immediately, no man can have any ocular sight of me, as we see those things that are before us; *God is a Spirit,* and therefore invisible. *Job* doth not complain, (in this sense) that he could not see God, for he knew God was not to be seen, nor did he wait for any such corporal view or sight or presence of God. Secondly, There is a mediate sight of God, and that by a three-fold means; First, in or by his Word; for that is one glass wherein we behold him. Secondly, there is a sight of God in his Works, they are another glass wherein we see and behold him; and those works are two-fold; First, the works of Creation, in them we may see or contemplate God all the world over, in his power, wisdom, and goodness, (*Rom. 1. 19, 20.*) Secondly, his works of providence, ordering and disposing all the motions of the creatures, as himself pleaseth, how much soever any of their motions are displeasing unto him. Thus we may see God in his works, that is, it is seen by his works, not only

only that he is, but what he is, or that he is Eternal and Infinite, that he is Most Wise and Omnipotent, that he can do all things, or that nothing is too hard for him, he having brought all things out of nothing. There is a Third Medium or Means by which we may see God, and that is, *His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ*, (2 Cor. 4. 6.) *The light of the knowledge of the Glory of God shineth to us in the face of Jesus Christ*; that is, in the person of Christ, God-Man, we may behold the glorious Grace of God unto poor sinful lost man. All the beams of Divine Love are collected in, and issue forth from the face of Jesus Christ. He that would see how good, how gracious, how merciful the Lord is to sinners, let him by an eye of Faith, or spiritual Contemplation look Christ in the face, and there he shall find the expresse Characters of all that Glory. By these Means, or mediately in all these wayes, God may be seen, and is seen by his People. This threefold sight of God, is the sight of Faith; it is by Faith that we see him in his Word; it is by Faith that we see him in his Works; it is by Faith that we see him in his Son. Thus we are to understand that of the Apostle concerning Moses, (Heb. 11. 27.) *He endured, as seeing him that is invisible.*

We may also distinguish of this sight of God two ways; there is a sight of God first in grace, which is, though a true and real, yet an imperfect sight, of which the Apostle speaks (1 Cor. 13. 12.) *Now we see as in a glasse, darkly.* Secondly, There is a seeing of God in glory, which is there called *A seeing of him face to face*: Of that sight Christ speaks (Math. 5. 8.) *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* As they now see him in the dispensations of his Grace here, so they shall see him in the givings forth, or manifestations of his Glory to them hereafter. Now when Job complaineth, or Elihu brings him in complaining, *That he should not see God*, we are not to understand it, as if he despaired of ever seeing God in Glory, or had concluded in his own breast, that he should never see him in his ways of Grace, or professed that at present he had no sight at all of God by faith; for, though I conceive *Jobs* sight of God by faith, or in the actings of his Grace, at that time was very low and dim, yet some sight he had of him by faith, enough I am sure to preserve and keep him from making any such negative Conclusion against him'self, that he should not see God in Glory. But that which he chiefly intendeth

*NW Intendit
oculos. Verbum
videndi foren-
se est, pro as-
tu coram ali-
quo cum magna
causa fiducia,
ita ut non de-
misso in terram
vultus, sed elato
capite ad inter-
rogantium re-
spondentem; ju-
dicem oculos
intrepide dirigi-
gere quis au-
deat. Bold.*

tendeth, is, that he feared he should not come to see him in such a day and way of tryal, as he before desired in the 23d Chapter, (vers. 8, 9.) or that God would never manifest himself so clearly in his Providences and dealings about his case in this world, as might acquit him, and bring the matter in question to a full state, that all might take notice of his wronged integrity. Job was under a great Cloud at that time, and feared that God had covered himself with a Cloud also, (as the Church benighted her self, *Lam. 3. 44.*) and therefore said, *I shall not see him*; I shall not see him as a Judge acquitting me, and giving sentence for me. Some conceive, that the Hebrew word rendred *Seeing*, refers to a person brought before a Judge, for the tryal of his Cause, and standing before him, not as a guilty Malefactor, with a heavy heart, and a down-look, but as a man conscious of his own innocency, with much honest boldnesse, and well tempered confidence. The words following intimate such a sence of that word, *Although thou sayest, thou shalt not see him*, (that is, be brought to tryal,) yet *Judgement is before him*, he will certainly try thee. This I take to be the most proper Explication of these words, *Although thou sayest, thou shalt not see him*.

Job spake this as the worst of his case, as that which was a greater grief and misery to him, than all his other miseries and griefs, that God would not set him in a clear light before others, or that himself should not have a clear light from God concerning his condition.

Hence Note;

The sight of God, or Gods discoverie of himself in any dark case, is very sweet to an upright and gracious soul.

Job had begged for this once and again, though possibly, as *Elihu* would here convince him, he was something too forward in it, and did not enough reflect upon himself; yet as he had often desired it, so doubtlesse it was exceeding much upon his heart, that he might have a clear discovery from God. The Apostle, in somewhat a like case, in being aspersed in his Ministry, saith, *We are made manifest unto God*, (2 Cor. 5. 11.) It pleased him that he was manifest unto God: But when God is pleased to manifest himself unto a Soul, how pleasing is that? When we can say, now we see God, we see him clearing up our way, clearing up our integrity,

tegrity, clearing up our state, how satisfying is it! And as it is most sweet and satisfying to see God clearing up our state to our own consciences, so it is exceeding sweet to see him clearing up our actions to the eye of the world; as the Apostle spake in the same place, *We are manifest unto God, and Trust also are made manifest in your consciences.* As if he had said, we hope, God hath discovered us to you, and your consciences do also attest with us and for us what we are. *Light is sweet* (the light of the air, saith Solomon) *and it is pleasant to behold the Sun,* the Sun in the firmament; how much more sweet is the light of divine favour, as also of our own faithfulness, shining into our hearts, and upon our wayes, so that we are able to say, now we see the Lord graciously rolling away our reproach, owning us, and taking our part before and against all the opposing contradicting world!

Secondly, Note;

A godly man may lose the sight and present apprehension of God, as owning of him, and taking care of him.

It is so often as to our spiritual estate, and it may be so, as to our outward state; hence those many complainings which we find in the *Psalms*, and those many deprecations, as to the hiding of Gods face; *David* would faine have kept sight of God, O how he desired to see him, to behold him! yet many times he did not, neither as to the assurance of his spiritual interest, nor as to the comforts of his outward condition, (*Psal. 13. 1.*) (*Psal. 27. 9.*) (*Psal. 30. 7.*) As God sometimes sheweth himself in a kind of cloud or darkness, in fire and tempest, which is very terrible to the soul; so he at other times discovers himself only a little, or gives but a glimpse of himself clearly, to stir up further desires of seeing him, and to make us weary of all we see in this world: in these cases we may be said not to see God when we see him. Many godly men are in such a dark condition, that they think God hideth his face from them in displeasure, when indeed he doth not, but only tryeth them, to see what is in them, and whether they will obey him in hope and patience, and keep close to him in holy walkings, even when he seemeth to depart from them, and withdraw his presence.

Thirdly, Observe;

Good men are apt sometimes to make over-sad conclusions against themselves,

P

As

Sæpe deus ostendit faciem suam, sed non ita ut cupiant homines, id est: non vident se videre, ut ita dicam.
Coc:

As evil men are apt to make over-good conclusions for themselves, they doubt not but they shall see and enjoy God. O what presumptuous thoughts have men, and what peremptory, though groundless, conclusions do they make for themselves upon false and rotten premises! they will say, they know God, and are known of God, they see God, and enjoy God, when they know not the meaning, much less have tasted the comfort of knowing God, or of being known by him, of seeing God, or of enjoying him. These mysterious experiences are not every man's meat, nor every man's matters, who makes title to the knowledge of God. The Apostle saith expressly; (1 John 2. 4.) *He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his Commandements, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.* And again, (Chap. 3. 6.) *Whoever sinneth (that is, loves and lives in sin) hath not seen him, neither known him.* Yet how many are there, far from keeping the Commandements of God, far from a holy life, yea far from a holy state, so far from such a holy life, as of which it may be said in a Gospel sense, that they sin not, that indeed they do nothing else but sin! yet these are apt to conclude, they see God, they see him by faith, they know him, they doubt not but he is their God. Now as many carnal men are apt to make false conclusions to themselves of an interest in God, when there is no such matter, kindling a fire, and compassing themselves about with their own sparks, as the Prophet speaks, (Isa. 50. 11.) that is, with vaine conceits of their own blowing up, that all is well with them; when all that they, who do so, shall have at Gods hand, is, *they shall lie down in sorrow.* So on the other side, godly men often times make sad conclusions against themselves, they say (as Job in the Text) *they shall not see him*; who though (as was shewed in opening the Text) he did not conclude against his sight of God by grace, or that he had no sight of him by faith, yet he had not a comfortable sight as to his present enjoyment, and he doubted whether ever he should in this world. *Jonah* made such a conclusion (Chap. 2. 4.) *Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight.* As *Hezekiah* said in his sickness, (Isa. 38. 11.) *I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the Land of the living*; that is, I shall die, and shall no more go into the house of the Lord, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his Temple, which was the one thing, even the only thing (in this life) which *David* desired and resolved to seek after, (Psal. 27.)

(*Psal. 27. 4.*) So many, while they live, are apt to make such conclusions, they shall see God no more, they shall not see him as long as they live, they are afraid they shall never have comfort more, nor peace more, while they are in this world, while they are on this side heaven; yet whether ever they shall come to see him in heaven, is their greatest, their saddest, their most heart-disquieting and heart-breaking doubt and feare. And indeed as we cannot see God, untill he gives us eyes, so we cannot believe we shall see him, untill he gives us hearts. Many times his dealings, both as to outward terrible providences, and inward terrors, are so dark, that we can see nothing but darkness, nor say any thing but as *Job* is here charged to say, that *we shall not see him*. Yet, God doth often hide himself from his people on purpose to try whether they will trust him and wait upon him under such withdrawals, for salvation, whether temporal or eternal, (*Isal. 45. 15.*) *Thou art a God that hidest thy self, O God of Israel, the Saviour*; Let us therefore take heed of saying, he will be for ever hidden, or that we shall never see, nor behold him as a Saviour; say not it is so dark with us, that as now we see no light, so our night shall never have a morning.

Fourthly, From these words, *Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him*, Note,

A good man is apt to give his heart and tongue too much liberty.

We should watch our hearts, to keep out or cast out vaine thoughts, we should strangle distrustful and unbelieving thoughts in the very birth, that so our tongues may never bring them forth, nor publish them to the offence of others. *Thou hast said, thou shalt not see him*. But when our unbridled tongues have run at random, and spoken what is not right, yet God will do what is right, as the next words assure us.

Yet Judgement is before him.

These words plainly intimate, that *Job's* scope, when he said he should not see God, was, that he should not see him as a Judge clearing up his cause, or appearing to vindicate the wrong done him, and to do him right. As if *Elihu* had said, Whatever thy opinion is concerning God, that he will never appear in thy cause to do thee right, yet know this (*O Job*) *Judgement is before him*,

and therefore I advise thee, be thou better perswaded both of his presence with thee, and of his providence over thee. The word rendred *Judgement*, is that from which one of the Patriarks had his name, and it is a great elegancy, (*Gen. 49. 16.*) *Dan shall Judge his people.* The proper name *Dan*, is the same with the Verb which follows, *shall Judge.*

When *Judgement* is said to be before the Lord, it may be taken three wayes, (so we find it in the Scripture) First, we read there of *Ju'dgement* as it is opposed to mercy. These terrible and dreadful Judgements of God are every where spoken of. Secondly, *Judgement* is opposed to imprudence and want of understanding or discretion; *Judgement* is a wise and clear sight or apprehension of things; as we say such a one is a Judicious man, or a man of a great *Judgement*. Thirdly, *Judgement* is opposed to injustice or to unrighteousness; thus we do judgement and justice. Many have a great stock of judgement or understanding, who yet will do little judgement, that is, little justice, they have a right understanding of things, yet will do little or nothing right. Here, when it is said, *Judgement is before him*, we are to understand it in the two latter senses; for though it be a great truth that judgement as opposed to mercy, is before the Lord, *And he shall have judgement without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy*, though (as the Apostle adds in the same place *James 2. 13.*) *Mercy rejoiceth (or glorieth) against Judgement*; The Lord hath judgements, all manner of judgements about him, yet that notion of judgement doth not belong to this place, but the two latter. *Judgement is before him*; that is, he is a God of infinite understanding and wildome, he seeth every thing to the utmost, he goes to the bottome of every mans case, yea, to the very bottome of every mans heart; he sees every action quite through, and every person: And as he knows the truth of every mans cause and case, so he will do every man right, according to the merit of his cause and case. *Justice and Judgement are the habitation of his throne, while clouds and darkness are round about him*, (*Psal. 97. 2.*) that is, though present dispensations are obscure (as in *Jobs* case) yet both the procedure and dealings of God, as also the issue or determination which he gives in every matter, is just and righteous to all men, as well as gracious and comfortable to good and upright-hearted men. Thus, *Judgement*, or this judgement is alwayes before him,

that

that is, he hath a clear sight of it, and he is ready to do it.

Hence Note, First,

God hath a right and clear apprehension of all persons and actions ;

His understanding is infinite. *The Lord is (as Hannah spake in her Thanksgiving-Song, 1 Sam. 2. 3.) a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed ; That is, he knoweth them exactly, to a grain, as we do the weight of those things which we have laid in an even Balance. It is required of Judges (in that advice which Jethro gave to Moses, Exod. 18. 21.) That they should be able men, that is, (not so much men of able purses, as) of able parts, men of able judgement, and of more than common understanding, even such as were able to look through every mans Cause that came before them. Such is the ability of the Lords understanding to the full, he is Omniscient, He is light, and in him is no darknesse at all. And as in him there is no darknesse, so nothing is dark to him ; the most intricate and knotty Case, the most ravel'd and vext Cause that ever was, is plain and evident before his eyes, with whom we have to do, and who hath to do with us. Judgement is before him ; neither is there any Judgement before any other in comparison of him ; God hath so much light, that Men and Angels are to him but darknesse; God seeth so much, that all others may be said not to see, or to be stark blind ; even those Judges may be called blind, who are not blinded, we may say they have no eyes, whose eyes are not put out with gifts, compared with God. How blind then are those Judges, who are blinded ? and whose eyes are put out, either by prejudice or passion, by hopes or fears ! it cannot be, but Judgement must be before God, because as he cleerly sees, and fully understands whatsoever comes before him, so nothing can divert or bias him from doing every man right, according to his sight and understanding. Judgement is before him.*

Hence Note, Secondly,

God will do right to every man, as sure as he knows the right of every man.

There are many who know what is right, who know whose Cause is right, yet will not do right. But as sure as God knows every mans right, so certainly he will do him right. *Abraham* pleaded

pleaded thus with God, *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* (Gen. 18. 25.) Certainly, he will do right, he cannot but do right; *Judgement is before him.* The Scripture is expresse, *He will reward every man* (and award to every man) *according to his works.* Every man shall have as he is; for (as the Apottle speaks, 1 Cor. 4. 6.) *He shall bring to light the hidden things of darknesse, and make manifest the counsels of the heart; and then shall every man have praise of God;* that is, every man shall have it, who is fit for it; every man shall have praise, who is (as we say) praise-worthy, how much soever he hath been dispraised, surr'd in his credit, unworthily dealt with, and accused in this world. God will not hold, or detain the truth of men in unrighteousnesse, though men hold both the truth of God, and the truth of men (the truth of their Causes) in unrighteousnesse. *Judgement is before the Lord.*

Further, That Particle which we render yet, gives us this Note.

God is never a whit the lesse Righteous, because it doth not appear to us that he is so.

Although thou sayest, thou shalt not see him, yet Judgement is before him. The wayes of God are often secrete, but none of them are unjust; *Judgement is before him,* even then, when we think it is farthest off from him. Therefore, if we will give God the glory of governing the world, and of ordering all our personal conditions, we must not measure him by the things we see, or which appear; for we cannot see the measure of his Judgement by what appears, that which appears to us is not his Judgement, something else is his judgement, and he in the close will make his judgement clear to all men, he will make it appear that judgement is his, though what his judgement is doth not appear. The mis-apprehensions, or mis-constructions of men do not at all retard or stop the righteousness of God, as the Apottle speaks in another case (Rom. 3. 3.) *Shall the unbelief of man make the Faith of God* (that is, the Faithfulness of God) *of none effect?* God forbid; God will be Faithful and True, though all the world be Unbelievers and Lyars. Now, as the unbelief of man cannot make the Faithfulness of God of none effect; so our not believing that Judgement proceeds, or our saying it is delayed, does
not

not at all take off God from righteousness in doing Judgement ; he is doing Judgement righteously, whatever apprehensions men have of his doings. *Judgement is before him ;*

Therefore trust thou in him.

Elihu according to the first reading of the former words, exhorts *Job* to Repentance, *Judge thy self ;* and here he exhorts him to Faith, *Trust thou in him. Judgement is before him, therefore trust thou in him, or wait and hope in him ;* for seeing God is a Just and Righteous Judge, he will not neglect or slight the Cause of any of his People ; therefore they have all the reason in the world to trust in him, and wait upon him. *It is unbelief which makes haste, Faith is content to wait and tarry.*

The Original word hath several significations. First, More general, to grieve, or be in pain and trouble. Secondly, In special, to bring forth, or the pain of a woman in travel to bring forth ; there is much pain in that travel. Thus some translate here, *Wait for him, as a woman in travel waits for deliverance.* Thirdly, As it signifies to have pain, and to have that pain in bringing forth children, so to attend, to wait, to stay quietly, and expect. *Rest in the Lord* (saith *David*, Psal. 37. 7.) *and wait patiently for him.* We may give the reason of this signification from that allusion. The woman though she be in pain, yet she patiently bears it, because she hath hope a man shall be born into the world, (*John* 16. 21.) A woman in that pain, hath not only patience but comfort under it, because she hopes a child shall shortly be born, who will recompence all her sorrows, in bearing and bringing him forth into the world. That's the force of this word, *Trust in him.* Thou art in pain, in trouble, in travel for the present, yet thou shalt have a blessed deliverance, thou shalt certainly find, that it is not in vain to trust upon God. Thus *Elihu* adviseth *Job* to such a patience as a woman in travel with child hath, who bears her pains comfortably, being refreshed and supported with an assurance, and fore-sense of that joy which she shall have, being once delivered. *Trust thou in him.* I have in some other places of this Book, met with this Point of trusting in God, *Job* said in the 13th Chapter of this Book, (*vers. 15.*) *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him ;* And therefore I shall not stay to open that general duty, or the exercise of that Grace, which here *Elihu* exhorts

לָלַךְ אֶל־
 Notat 1. Dole-
 re. 2. Parturi-
 re. 3. Minere,
 Perseverare.
 4. Sperare.
 Forte per meta-
 phoram, quia
 animus sperans
 futurum gau-
 dium cum do-
 lore parturit.
 Coc.

exhorts Job to, *Trusting in, or waiting upon God.* Only from the Connexion,

Note ;

First, *It is our duty to wait and trust upon God ;*

And 'tis such a duty as will keep us close to all other duties, a mind staid on God, is a mind fit to move about any good work whatsoever, which God calleth us unto.

Secondly, Put all together, *Thou sayest, thou shalt not see him,* (thou art doubtful whether ever things will mend,) yet *Judgement is before him, therefore trust.*

Hence Note ;

When things are not clear to us, when we have no light about what God is doing, or what he will do, yet it is our duty to trust and wait upon God.

We must wait upon God, and trust in him, though we do not see him, yea, though we cannot see him, for *Judgement is before him.* That of the Prophet (*Isa. 50. 10.*) is a clear proof of this duty, (and some expound this Scripture specially respecting outward dark providences, as others of inward darkness, or darkness of spirit) *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his servants, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light* (as Job saith here, *I shall not see him*) What shall a poor benighted soul do in that case? The answer or advice followeth) *Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.* How dark soever our condition is, yet it is our duty to trust upon God ; and if once we are enabled to give God the glory due to his name, in confessing, that *Judgement is before him,* we shall readily trust upon him, to order all things for us, though all things seem out of order, even to amazement; though we see heaven and earth, as it were, confounded, yet we shall readily trust upon him, because we believe, that even then *Judgement is before him.* How soon can he turn our darkness into light, who in the first Creation, when all lay together in a confused heap, and darkness over all, brought forth light and set all in order? The Lord can command light out of darkness, good out of evil, order out of confusion, and he can do all this easily, and at an instant ; therefore whatever the appearances of things are, let not us judge according to appearance, but hope
and

and wait, and stick to what God hath promised. Though providences appear crosse to promises and propheties, yet they never frustrate either. Let us also be sure to stick to the commandements of God, for we may rest assured, God will stick to his promises. To keep Commandements is our work, to keep promises is Gods work; though we fayle much in our work, God will not fayle at all in his work: To believe this, is the highest and truest work of faith. But if we are faithful in our work, the keeping of Commandements, we have a further evidence, that God will be faithful in his work, the keeping or fulfilling of promises, (a great part, the most spiritual part of Gods fulfilling promises, being his enabling of us to keep Commandements) and then we shall be able to say, not only in faith, but from experience, *that Judgement is before him.* And untill we come to this conclusion of faith in dark times, when we cannot see him, the soul never sits down in rest. Nothing fixes the soul but trust in God; we are unquiet, yea we boyle with unquietness, and tosse as the angry Sea with the windes, till we trust fully upon God, upon his wisdom and power, upon his goodness and faithfulness, and can say, let him do as seems good in his eyes; we know he is and will be good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. When we can once stay our minds on God, we are quiet; but when we must bring God to our mind, and must have God go our pace, or come at our time, and work in our way, (none of which he will do, what a do soever we make to have it so) O how restless and troubled are we, even like the troubled Sea when it cannot rest! And O how much of this restless trouble discovers it self in the minds of many (that I say not the most of) men, and all because they cannot trust God when they do not see him, or because when they do not see him (which was *Jobs* sayling) they say, *they shall not see him.* If matters come not to pass according to their platforme, and model, or hit not the dates and dayes, the times and seasons which they have fixt in their unscriptural Kalender, or by a mistake of the Scripture Kalender, they are ready to say, *they shall not see him,* their hopes are as the giving up of the ghost, that is, they give all for lost, and past recovery. *Mary* trust God (as they do some men) *no farther than they see him;* they are the worst and coursest sort of men, whom we trust no otherwise. How dishonourable then, how infinitely below God is such a trust?

Q

Elihu

Elihu would have *Job* (and to should we) trust God, though he could not see him, and said he should not. *Thou hast said, thou shalt not see him, yet trust in him.*

Lastly, From the illative particle, *therefore* (that is, *because Judgement is before him*) *trust thou in him.*

Note hence ;

The consideration of the Righteousness and Justice of God, is a mighty argument to provoke us to trust him, and wait upon him.

Trust is not every bodies due ; some (as we speak proverbially) are to be trusted no farther than a man can throw a Millstone, that is, they are not to be trusted at all : Trust (I say) is not every bodies due : but to trust God is every bodies duty, yea and interest too, for he is clothed as much with righteousness and justice, as he is with strength and power. Will you not trust an honest man, will you not trust a wise man ? We can come to a height of confidence in man sometimes, if we think him a man of judgement and wisdom, of honesty and faithfulness, we can trust all we have in such a mans hand ; how much more should we say to God, seeing *Judgement is before him, therefore will we trust in him.* We have an eminent Scripture, urging this duty upon this ground, (*Isa. 30. 18.*) *The Lord is a God of Judgement* (Judgement is there taken in the same notion as here in the Text, he is a wise and a just God, the Lord is a God of judgement, what followeth) *Blessed are they that wait for him.* There can be nothing said, more urging, more encouraging to wait and trust on God, to do us right, then this, *He is a God of Judgement, a righteous God, Judgement is before him.*

Thus far of the good counsel which *Elihu* gave *Job* in this his dark and deserted state ; and counsel it was worthy to be embraced with both armes, and with an open breast ; and that *Job* had need of it, he shews in the next words, while he tells *Job* and us, it was not so with him yet, as appeared by the sad hand of God upon him, and his own distemper under it.

JOB, Chap. 35. Vers. 15, 16.

15. *But now because it is not so, he hath visited in his anger, yet he knoweth it not in great extremity.*

16. *Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain: he multiplieth words without knowledge.*

IN the close of the former verse, *Elihu* called upon and exhorted *Job* to a patient reliance, and trust on God, *Judgement is before him, therefore trust thou in him*; here in the 15th verse he shews, that, the reason why God visited him so sorely, and yet continued his visitation upon him, was because he did not, as he ought, patiently trust in, and rely upon him.

There are several readings of this verse, but I shall only mention one, besides our own, and having stayed a little about that, go on to the explication of the Text, as it lyes in order before us. Some render thus;

But know now, his anger hath visited thee but a little, (Hebr: Nunc autem ei-
nothing) neither hath he made any great inquisition. The sense of
the verse, according to this rendering, riseth thus; As if Elihu had
said, God hath dealt with thee O Job, far better than thou hast dealt
with him, or then thou hast cause to expect; he hath not laid his hand
so heavy upon thee, as thy iniquity hath deserved, and yet thou com-
plaineest much of his severity; whereas indeed he hath not strictly in-
quired into the multitude of thy sins, which if he had done, he would
certainly have brought upon thee, a greater multitude of afflictions,
he would have afflicted thee much more: Thou art too well used to
complain thus; That's the summe of this rendering, which the lear-
ned Authors of it make fairly out from the Original, to whom I
refer the Reader, and shall only offer two notes from it, for in-
struction.

*to quod paulu-
lume visitavit
ira ipsum, neque
inquisivit mul-
titudinem admodum.
Merc:
Scito perenni-
guum esse, quo
te deus iratus
plaudit, nisi le-
viter in te in-
qui ere maluit
Jer. Bez:*

First, *The sorest afflictions that fall upon sinners in this life are little or nothing to what God might lay upon them.*

There is no condition here actually so bad, but possibly it might be worse; though the darkness of night be upon us, yet it may be

Et nunc quia
nihil est quod
visitavit ira
ejus. Drus.

darker with us ; God can make a night so dark, that the former darkness may be called light ; God can add so much bitterness to that which is very bitter, so much weight to that burden of affliction, which is already very heavy, that the former bitter may be called sweet, and that former weight of affliction, light. Are any poor, sick, or pained, God can make them poorer, sicker, and so encrease their paine, that former poverty, sickness, paine, may go for riches, health, and ease. And as present sufferings of one kind or other, are but little to what they may be, so they are but little to what we have deserved they should be : The least mercy is more than we deserve, and the greatest affliction is less than we deserve. *He hath visited thee little or nothing*, (so the word is) saith *Elihu*, according to this reading of the Text. The Lord hath not only not visited thee too much, O *Job*, but he may be said, not to have visited thee at all, or the All of thy visitation is nothing to that which the Lord could have brought upon thee. *David* gives a general assertion near this concerning the dealings of the Lord, in his angry dispensations, (*Psal.* 103. 10.) *He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities* ; that is, our sins and our iniquities might have born out the Justice of God in laying heavier evils and troubles upon us, than yet he hath done. *Sinners never have their full punishment till they come to hell.* As the sweetest joyes and strongest consolations which the godly find and feel on earth, are only tastes and first-fruits of that they shall have in heaven ; so all the sorrows and sufferings of the wicked in this world, are but tastes, light touches and beginnings of sorrow, compared with the pains and sorrows of the next world, where sinners shall be payd their wages in full.

Drumg; visi-
andi & recen-
sendi vel cog-
noscendi ver-
bum in hoc loco
judicii vel ma-
gistratus in pec-
catores animad-
versionem in-
quisitionem pu-
nitioni conjun-
ctum importat.
Bold.

Secondly, From the latter part of the verse thus translated, *Neither hath he made any great inquisition* ; that is, he hath not taken strict knowledge of thy sins, though a multitude, though even past number ; though there be abundance of them, and they abounding in sinfulness, yet he hath not made any great inquisition after them ;

Hence Note ;

The Lord doth not severely mark the sins of his people, no nor the multitude nor magnitude of their sins, to punish them.

(*Psal.*

(*Psal.* 130. 3.) *If thou Lord shouldest mark iniquity,* implying that the Lord doth not mark (in the sense here intended) *if thou shouldest mark iniquity*) O Lord, who shall stand? The word in that Psalm rendred to mark, notes, first, to watch, or to observe with exactest diligence, and is therefore in the Noun rendred a watch Tower, upon which a man is placed to take observation of all things that are done, and of all persons that passe by, or approach and come near. A Watch-man placed upon a high-Tower, is bound industriously and critically to observe all Passengers, and passages, all that his eye can reach: So saith the Text, If thou shouldest mark as a Watch-man, and eye with rigour every thing that passeth from us, *Who could stand?* That is, make good his Cause in the day of his judgement and tryal before thee? Secondly, The word signifieth to keep in mind, to lay up, to have, as it were, a store and stock, a memorial or record, of such and such things by us. In that notion it is said (*Gen.* 37. 11.) *Josephs Brethren envied him, but his Father observed the saying;* he marked what Joseph spake about his Dreams, he laid it up, and did not let it passe away as a Dream, or as a vision of the night: Thus in the Psalm, *If the Lord should mark iniquity,* if he should treasure up our sins in his memory, and keep them by him, *who were able to stand when accounted with?* The Lord in a way of grace, seeth as if he saw not, and winks at us oftentimes when we do amiss, as he is said to have done at those times, the times of ignorance, when not only many things, but even every thing was done amiss, and out of order, in the dark Gentile world, before the approach of Gospell light, (*Acts* 17. 30.) *And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent.* That is, the Lord took little notice of those untaught times, in comparison of that strict notice which he will take of these times; concerning which, he gave command to his Apostles, *Go and teach all Nations;* and yet the strictest notice which he takes of our sins in these times, is but little to what he might.

So much from that Translation of the Text; our own runs thus.

Vers. 15. *But now because it is not so, he hath visited in his anger; yet he knoweth it not in great extremity.*

We

שמר

We must expound this Verse in Connexion with the latter part of the former.

But now because it is not so.

What is not lo? what is missing? what is wanting? What had Job done amiss? or what had he mist to do? *Elisha* seems to answer, he hath mist the doing of that duty to which he was moved in the close of the fore-going Verse, expressed in those words, *Trust thou in him, or wait upon him: But now because it is not so*; that is, Because thou dost not put forth such acts of holy confidence, and patient waiting upon God as thou oughtest, and as I admonished thee to do, therefore God is engaged, and even compelled to treat thee thus roughly and severely, *He hath visited in his anger*. As if he had said, Though thou hast professed a trust in God, yet thou dost not trust in him fully, as becomes thee, yea, thou seemest sometimes (as a man forlorn) to cast up thy hopes; therefore, because thou dost not trust in him, because it is not so as I have exhorted and directed thee, the Lord hath visited in anger. Mr. *Broughton* renders, *But now for missing, his anger doth visit*. For missing; that is, for missing of duty, or for not acting up to duty, for not trusting fully in the Lord, the Lord hath visited thee in his anger. This sense is obvious and commodious according to our reading. *But now because it is not*

Homo tentatur
et in **examen**
vocatur ut pro-
betur ejus spes
et patientia ;
quandoquidem
igitur illa non
exstat, invasit
ira ejus, qua
odit, et ameli-
tur peccat. m,
etiam in **in**
quos diligit, et
salvos vult
maxime. Coc.

פקד אפו
ira ejus visita-
vit.

He hath visited in his anger, or strictly, his anger hath visited :

That is, God hath heavily afflicted thee. God is far from all passion and perturbation of mind, only he is said to be angry, or to visit in his anger, when he doth that which anger produceth among men; when he casts down and punisheth, when he lays his hand sorely upon the Creature, then he is said to be angry, then *His anger hath visited*. The word notes quick breathing in the Nostrils; anger appears, or vents it self there; as it is said of Paul, when Saul (Acts 9. 1.) *And Saul yet breathing out threatenings, and slaughter against the Disciples of the Lord, went unto the High Priest*. You might see anger, as it were foam, yea flame out of his mouth, and evaporate at his nostrils. Thus saith Elihu, *Because it is not so, his anger*

Hach

Hath visited.

To visit, is properly to go to, and see any person whom we respect and love; thus we visit friends in civility and courtesie. Secondly, To visit is an act of pity and mercy; and thus we visit the sick, the widow, and the fatherlesse (James 1. 27.) Pure Religion, and undefiled before God, and the Father, is to visit the fatherlesse and widows in their affliction; that is, to go to them in pity, either for the supply of their wants by our purse, or for the comforting of their hearts by our counsel. Thirdly, We visit in care, as well as in kindnesse, that is, when we go to our Families or Flocks, or places of charge, wheresoever they are, and see that, or whether, all things are well and right with them, or well, and rightly done towards them, according to the rules that such persons under our charge ought to act, and live by: Thus in Colledges and Hospitals, there is a visitation of care, to make enquiry of persons in trust, about persons and things under their trust.

To the Point in hand; there is a twofold visitation of God.

First, He visits in love and mercy, (*Ruth. 1. 6.*) *Then she (that is Naomi) arose with her Daughter in Law, that she might return from the Countrey of Moab, for she had heard in the Countrey of Moab, how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread.* That is, God had shewed them kindnesse and mercy in relieving them from that devouring famine. Again, (*Gen. 21. 6.*) *And the Lord visited Sarah, as he had said; that is, he gave her the promised mercy of a Son.* Once more, (*Luke 1. 68.*) *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited, and redeemed his People; and that's a blessed visitation indeed, which brings redemption.* Thus the Scripture often speaks of Gods visitation in mercy.

Secondly, There is a visitation of God in anger, wrath and judgement. The Law saith (*Exod. 20. 4, 5.*) *Thou shalt not make to thy self any graven Image, &c. Thou shalt not bow down thy self to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, unto the third and fourth Generation of them that hate me: That is punishing the iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, these Children continuing in their Fathers ways, to do sinfully; such Children*

dren as take up the evil examples, or tread in the bad steps of their fore-Fathers, shall suffer for it. The Prophet at once upbraided the impudent Jews, and threatned them in this Language, (*Jer. 6. 15.*) *Were they ashamed when they had committed abominations? nay, they were not ashamed, neither could they blush; therefore they shall fall among them that fall at the time that I visit them, they shall be cast down, saith the Lord. Again, (Isa. 26. 14.) Therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them.* There is a visitation for destruction, that's a sad visitation. In this sense we read of a time of visitation (*Jer. 8. 12. Jer. 10. 15.*) We read of days of visitation, (*Hosea 9. 7.*) *The dayes of visitation are come, the dayes of recompence are come.* We read also of a year of visitation, (*Jer. 23. 12.*) *For I will bring evil upon them, even the year of their visitation, saith the Lord.* As also (*Chap. 11. 23.*) *I will bring evil upon the men of Anathoth, even the year of their visitation.* This is the visitation here spoken of; it is a time, a day, a year of sore visitation with thee, O Job. *Because it is not so, he hath visited in his anger.*

Hence Note, First,
God expects the work of Faith and Patience, when his afflicting hand is upon us.

Faith hath much work to do at all times, but most in times of affliction. There is also a use of two sorts of patience in our best dayes; the patience of labouring in Gods work, and the patience of waiting for the reward of our work, after all our labours: But in sad dayes the Lord expects we should exercise both patience in suffering, and in waiting for deliverance out of all our sufferings; then 'tis that both Faith and Patience, trusting and waiting must have their perfect work.

Secondly Note;
When the Lord doth not find or see, as he expects, the work of Faith and Patience in a time of affliction, he will afflict more and more until he finds or works it.

This is it which *Elihu* saith in the Text, *Because it is not so, he hath visited in his anger.* Job was sorely afflicted before, but now he is visited in anger, because he did not manifest such trust in God as he expected in that condition. As when the wicked repent

repent not of their sins under the punishing hand of God, he will punish them more and more, even seven times more for their sins, (*Levit. 26. 41.*) So when good men act not their Graces, believe not, trust not under the afflicting hand of God, he usually afflicts them more and more, gives them softer stripes, and layeth yet heavier burdens on them. When God misseth what he look'd for, we may quickly feel what we looked not for. Mr. *Broughtons* Translation speaks the Point fully, *But now for missing, his anger doth visit.* Man seldom misseth trouble from God, when God misseth duty from man; and 'tis a mercy that he doth not: 'tis mans mercy when God minds him of his deficiencies in duty, though by a smart visiting rod. Thus the Lord spake of *Dauids* Seed, (and 'tis to be understood of all the Seed of Christ, whom *David* typed, *Psal. 89.*) *If his children forsake my Law, (v. 30, 31.) Then (vers. 32.) will I visit their transgressions with the Rod, &c.* How true this charge of *Elihu* was, as to *Jobs* omission of duty, I shall not stay to enquire; only this we know, *Job* had professed trust in God, yet because it was mingled with so much complaint, with so many unbelieving expostulations, *Elihu* might say the Lord missed the patience, trust and confidence, which he expected from *J. 4.* Doubtlesse, more of all these should have appeared in him, and they should have appeared more in that time of affliction. There are two things which God looketh for, and aims at in the time of our affliction; first, the mortifying of corruptions, that they work no more, at least no more so strongly as they have done; secondly, The stirring up, and acting of our Graces, that they may be more working, and work more strongly than ever they have done. Where the Lord sees not these effects of affliction, that our sins grow lesse, and our graces more, that we complain lesse, and trust or believe more, we are like to be afflicted more, and he will discover his anger more. *Because it is not so, he hath visited in his anger.* And thence

Note, Thirdly;

Distrust or impatience under the afflicting hand of God, or our not trusting God in our worst condition patiently, is a very provoking sin.

We provoke the Lord to visit us in his anger, when we do not

R

trust

trust in his mercy. Our not trusting God must needs provoke him to anger; for when we do not trust him, we question him; distrust or unbelief questions all that God is, and all that God hath promised, it questions his Truth, and his Faithfulness, his Power, his Mercy, and his Goodness; all these, which are the glory of God, and in all which the sons of men ought to glorify him, these are all questioned and darkened, when we put not forth acts of trust and reliance upon God, in times of greatest affliction and extremity. Is it not then a provoking sin, I say not to with-draw trust from God, and give it to an arm of flesh, but not to put out fresh and full acts of trust upon God, let our affliction or extremity be what it will! The Children of *Israel* were in great extremity at the Red Sea, a mighty Army pursuing them at the heels to destroy them, and mighty waters being before them, ready to swallow them up; in these straits (whilest they should have done their utmost to get, and assure God to be their Friend) the Psalmist tells us, *They provoked him*, (Psalm. 106, 7.) But wherein lay their provocation? that Scripture saith, *They remembered not the multitude of his mercies*: The former mercies of the Lord did not strengthen their trust in present troubles; that was one provocation. And as former mercies did not strengthen their trust, so the present trouble drew out their distrust, as another Scripture assures, reporting their behaviour in it (*Exod. 14. 11.*) *And they said to Moses, Because there were no Graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to dye in the Wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?* What were these fearful fore-casts, these amazing bode-ments of an unavoidable (as they apprehended) ruine, but the overflowings of unbelief, or distrust in God; and this was another provocation. Former mercies are forgotten, yea eaten up by unbelief, as the seven lean Kine in *Pharaoh's* dream, eat up the fat ones, and present difficulties are aggravated by unbelief, as if all the power of God could not remove and overcome them. And will not the Lord (think you) visit in anger for such a sin as this?

Again, As *Elihu* doth not say barely, he hath visited, but *he hath visited in his anger*, or *his anger hath visited*, so consider, who was it that was thus visited in anger? It was *Job*, a Godly man, a man perfect and upright.

Hence

Hence note, Fourthly ;
God viſits or afflicts, even his own people, his elect, and choiceſt ſervants, with fatherly anger, when they diſpleaſe and provoke him.

We find the Scripture ſpeaking expreſſy of the anger of God towards the beſt of his ſervants, even towards a *Moses*, (as himſelf made confeſſion, *Deuter. 1. 37.*) when they diſpleaſe him ; *Alſo the Lord was angry with me for your ſakes, ſaying, thou alſo ſhalt not go in thither.* *Moses* was a moſt meek man, the meekeſt man upon the face of the earth, nor was he an inferior in any other grace, yet the Lord was angry with him, and angry with him upon that ſpecial occaſion, his unbelieve, (*Numb. 20. 12.*) *And the Lord ſpake unto Moses and Aaron, becauſe ye believe me not, to ſanctifie me in the eyes of the children of Iſrael, therefore &c.* We read of the Lords anger breaking out againſt *Aaron* for another ſin, (*Numb. 12. 9.*) *The anger of the Lord was kindled againſt them,* that is, againſt *Aaron* and *Miriam*, becauſe they had ſpoken againſt *Moses*, (verſ. 1. 8.) *Aaron* was the High Prieſt, and as he was high in office, ſo eminent in grace ; and doubtleſs *Miriam* was a very gracious woman, yet the Lord was not only angry with them, but exceeding angry ; his anger waxed hot againſt them and kindled, when they forgot their duty to *Moses*, and remembred not their diſtance with reverence. *Solomon* in his prayer at the Dedication of the Temple, ſpeaks of the people of God collectively ; *If they ſin againſt thee, and thou be angry with them.* The Lord is not only angry with the world, but angry with his Church, not only angry with *Babylon*, but with *Jeruſalem*. And as *Solomon* ſpake that of the whole Nation of the *Jewes*, ſuppoſing they might fall under the Lords anger all together as a body ; ſo he did experience it ſadly in his own perſon, (*1 Kings 9. 11.*) *And the Lord was angry with Solomon, becauſe his heart was turned from the Lord God of Iſrael, which had appeared unto him twice.* Wiſe *Solomon* departed from God through an evil heart of unbelief and vanity, after the Lord had come and appeared to him more than once in grace and favour ; and the bitter effects or fruits of that departure, appeared to him ſhortly after, the Lord (ſaith that Scripture) *was angry with Solomon* ; and the ſequel of his Hiſtory tells us, there went out very hot di-

pleasure against him. As these Scriptures are a proof of the Lords anger kindling against his people when they sin; so we find the Church represented praising the Lord for quenching the fire of his anger, (*Isa. 12. 1.*) *And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me.* When we turn from God, his anger is turned against us, and when we turn to God, his anger is turned away from us. When the Lord is angry, what can comfort us, but the turning away of his anger? And by the very act of turning away his anger, he comforts us, though all the world be angry with us.

But some may say, How doth the Lord, who is said to love his people with an everlasting love, visit them in anger? To clear that, we may distinguish of anger.

First, There is correcting anger: Secondly, there is consuming or destroying anger. Destroying anger is inconsistent with everlasting love, but not correcting anger: correcting anger may be very grievous, therefore the Prophet deprecates it, (*Jer. 10. 24.*) *Correct me, O Lord, in judgement, not in thy anger.* The Lord doth often exercise (that is as often as there is cause, and we give him cause too often to exercise) a smart and severe anger towards his own people; but his consuming and destroying anger is the lot and portion of the wicked; *If his anger be kindled but a little* (namely against his enemies) *blessed are they that trust in him*; blessed are they that believe, when that anger of the Lord breaks forth against unbelievers. Or we may state it thus;

First, God is angry with sinful persons; thus he is angry with the world, or with wicked men.

Secondly, God is angry with persons for sinning, (there is a great difference between these two; anger with sinful persons, and anger with persons for their sin, or for sinning) and thus he is angry with his own people, even with the godly when they sin, though not for every sin.

Further, We may distinguish of anger thus; There is anger mixed with a desire of taking revenge upon those that we are angry with, a revengeful anger: thus the Lord is angry only with the wicked. Of this anger *Moses* speaks, having described a presumptuous sinner, who believes not only without a word, but against the word, who *when he heareth the word of the curse, blesseth him*

himself in his heart, saying, *I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness unto thirst; then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smite against that man, &c.* (*Deut. 29. 19, 20.*) Read more of this revengeful anger of the Lord, (*Deut. 32. 22, 41, 42.*) Secondly, there is anger with a desire to reforme, and reclaime those that we are angry with: Thus a loving and indulgent father is angry with his child, when he hath committed a fault; he is angry, not with an anger of desire to revenge, but with an anger of desire to reforme. And thus the Lord is angry with his own people, with his choicest servants, and dearest children, when they forget their duty and play the wantons.

Lastly, We may distinguish of anger thus; There is First, a temporary anger: As there is a temporary faith in hypocrites, so (we may say) there is a temporary anger in God against the faithful when offending; that is, he is angry with them for a while, for a season: *Sing unto the Lord, O ye Saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his Holiness,* (saith David, *Psal. 30. 4.*) But why doth he call them to singing? we have the reason of it given at the 5th verse, *For his anger endureth but a moment;* he speaks there of the Lords anger against his Saints and peculiar people: while they indeed have cause to mourn for provoking the Lord to anger, they may also sing, both because his anger endureth but for a moment, that is, because (if that be all) it endureth not at all, (a moment is of no endurance) as also because *in his favour is life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.* Once more, hear the Prophets report of the Lords anger, (*Micah 7. 18.*) *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage; he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.* God doth not retain his anger for ever; that is, not long; yea, that *not for ever*, is but a little while, a moment, and that but a small moment, as the Prophet *Isaiah* saith, (*Chap. 54. 7.*) As if he had said, The Lords anger is not retained so long, as if it should be alwayes retained; his anger towards you is soon blown over, and gone, upon the matter (like a moment) as soon as come. Such is the anger which God discovers towards his own people.

Secondly, There is an anger for ever, an abiding wrath, a fire of anger which never goeth out, nor can be put out, which is kindled

led in the breast of God against ungodly men, and against them only as living and dying without repentance, in their ungodliness. *Job* a godly man, was visited in the former, not in this latter anger.

Yet for the fuller answer to this query, as it concerns *Job's* case, I conceive *Elihu* speaks with the highest and hardest towards him. For though it be a truth, that the Lord discovers, as was shewed before, a fatherly anger towards his children when he chasteneth them for their sin, yet he chasteneth them more, or rather, in love than in anger; *As whom he loves, he rebukes and chastens,* (Rev. 3. 19.) so he chastens and rebukes them in love. And as for *Job*, whom God dearly loved, it is cleare from the first and second Chapters of this Book, that God afflicted him not for any special sin, or way of sinning, but for his tryal, and to set him up as a great pattern of patience to all succeeding generations: Or we may say that God afflicted *Job*, not because of any provocation which he had given him, but at Satans instance and provocation, (Chap. 2. 3.) All that can be said for *Elihu's* help in saying that God visited him in anger, is only this, That though *Job* had not provoked the Lord to visit him in anger when he began to visit him, yet some impatient and over-bold speeches of his, or that liberty of speech which he took in expostulating and almost contesting with God about his afflictions, might cause him to visit him in such anger as hath been set forth in answer to the query. *And now because it is not so*, because the Lord misseth those acts of grace, trust and patience, which thy case calleth thee to the exercise of, *He hath visited in his anger*; and what followeth?

Yet he knoweth it not in great extremity.

Elihu seems to have spoken this turning himself to the company, and complaining to them of *Job's* insensibleness, *Yet he knoweth not*, &c.

Some refer this clause of the verse to God also, *He hath visited in his anger, and taketh no notice of the great increase, or of that which is greatly increased*; that is, God hath spared nothing from his visitation, although the party visited were never so much grieved or damnified in the loss and spoyle of his all. There was a necessity (saith this Author) that he who was visited should be so toucht as to be sensible of the stroke; which could not be, unless the

Et non advertit ad auctorem valde. i.e. Nichil discretevit (sc: deus) quod non visitaret, etiam si eare visitatus magis desleret. Nam necesse erat visitatum in auctorem

the greatest of his encrease, and those things which were most dear to him were taken away from him, or he were stript naked and bereaved of them.

Our translation refers these words to the person visited, as if he, though reduced to the greatest extremities, yet was not sensible of it, or took no notice of what he suffered, or was done to him; *Yet he knoweth it not in great extremity.* Who knoweth not? the Antecedent to *he* is *Job*, according to this translation; *because he knoweth not.* But what did not *Job* know? First, He knew not the dealings of God with him, to submit to them as he should. Secondly, He knew not that there was such a mis or deficiency in the acting of his graces, he perceived not how weak a soul he had in that weak body; his trust, his faith, did not act, *and yet he knew it not*, or took no notice of his fayling in those duties. Thirdly, *He hath visited in his anger, yet he knoweth it not*, that is, he knoweth not the anger of God, who visiteth him. To know may be taken three ways.

First, For the bare notion or apprehension of a thing; thus certainly *Job* did know that he was visited, for he spake often and enough of it.

Secondly, To know, is to consider, to lay a thing to heart, (*Isa. 1. 3.*) *My people doth not know, Israel doth not consider*, the latter part is exegetical, and expounds the former, *My people doth not know*, that is, *doth not consider*. So (*Hos. 2. 8.*) *She did not know that I gave her corn*, &c. (*Psal. 90. 11.*) *Who knoweth the power of thy anger?* that is, who considers it? *who weighs what the anger of the Lord is?* we have sweet thoughts, about the mercy, and love, and goodness of God, yet 'tis little, very little of any of these that we know. The love of God, which we delight to know, passeth knowledge, (*Eph. 3. 19.*) But for the anger of God, which is so dreadful, we seldom set our selves to the study of it; none can know it comprehensively, and few seek or labour to know it industriously, considerately.

Thirdly, To know, is to be under a due sense of what we know: We may know a thing, and consider it, yet not have a feeling of it. I conceive we are to understand the word *know* here, in these two latter senses; *He knoweth it not*; that is, he doth not consider, nor hath he a due sense, either of the defect of his own graces, that his faith acts not as it ought, that his trust performs

*gi ut sentiret:
quod fieri non
poterat, si non
et plerq; et
charissimiq; qd;
bona adimeren-
tur. Coc:*

not

not its part as it should ; nor doth he know the anger of God in this visitation ; that is, he knoweth not, nor considereth, the scope and meaning of God in this angry dispensation. *Yet he knoweth it not*

In great extremity.

משפּט רב
Multitudo,
multum passim
occurrit in
Targ: Interdum
in Hebraisnas.
Merc.

The word signifieth any kind of encrease (*Mal. 4. 2.*) *They shall go forth, and grow up as the Calves of the Stall.* So 'tis used (*Jer. 50. 11.*) *Because ye are grown fat, we put in the Margin, big or corpulent.* (*Lev. 13. 5.*) *If the Plague (of Leprosie he means) encrease, grow great, and spread it self, then &c.* *Jobs* affliction was a great one at first, and it grew greater afterwards : He was in *great extremity*, or in extremities ; of what ? in great extremity, First, of loss and poverty in his Estate ; Secondly, of pain and torment in his Body ; Thirdly, of grief and anguish in his Soul : In all these he suffered, and suffered extreamly, or in great extremity. Mr. Broughton renders, *Because Job knoweth not this great plenty*, namely, of sorrows, which compats him about.

This was the censure of *Elihu* upon *Job*, and *Job* had given *Elihu* too much ground for this censure. Though *Jobs* Faith and trust were strongly at work sometimes, yet they did not alwayes continue their work in the same degree or strength : and while he often complained in his extremity, that God dealt with him as with an enemy, he did not well consider what that anger of God was, in which he visited him, during the time of that great extremity : *Yet he knoweth it not in great extremity.*

As *this not knowing* is referred to his weakness in acting his Graces ; now, it is not so, yet he knoweth it not ;

Note ;

A godly man is not alwayes sensible of his defects and failings in grace.

As some have little or no Grace, who yet conceit they have much (*Rev. 3. 17.*) *Thou sayest, I am rich, and encreased in goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and naked.* So others who have grace, yea, much grace in the habit (as *Job* had) may be very insensible how little it acts, yea they may suppose it acts much, when the actings of it are intermitted or extreamly suppressed by passion and

and corruption: They may think their Faith strong, or that they trust fully in God, they may think themselves patient and humble under the hand of God, and yet be greatly defective in the working of all these Graces; I mean not such a deficiency only, as is common to all believers (the best come short in the exercise of grace) but some great deficiency may be, and yet the soul not sensible of it. As some are over-sensible of their failings, complaining that they have no Faith, no Patience, when they not only have Faith and Patience, as to their Being, but as to their working also, and possibly, working well. (It is a different work of the Spirit, to act and stir up Grace in us, and to discover to us the actings and stirrings of Grace) Now as some godly men act Grace, and know it not, so in others that are godly Grace acts not, and they know it not; Faith is down, and they know it not; they can bear little or nothing patiently, yet they take no notice of it. Thus the words of *Elihu* concerning *Job*, *he knoweth it not*, refer to the former part of the verse, *It is not so*; that is, his Graces act not, yet he takes no notice of it, but thinks Faith and Patience, with other Graces, work well enough.

Secondly, As *not knowing* refers to the visitation of God, *He hath visited him in his anger, and he knoweth it not* (yea, though) in great extremity, though he have a very hard time of it.

Hence Note, First,

A good man may not only be visited, but extreemly visited by the hand of God;

He may be under many extremities at once; extreemly visited in Body, extreemly in Mind, extreemly in his Relations, extreemly in his Name, extreemly in all his workly concerns. As there is no outward evil, for the matter, so none for the degree, but a good man may be in it. Let us be moderate in judging those, who are in the extreamest extremities of suffering.

Secondly, Note;

Some good men, or good men sometimes under very great afflictions, are not sensible of the hand of the Lord upon them.

As a good man may receive many mercies, and yet not observe (at present) how, or from whom he receives them, so he may be under angry visitations or dispensations in great extremity, and

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not

not mind the dealing of God with him in it, nor what he intendeth by it; yea, he may complain of the burthen, and cry out under the pressure, yet not know it at that time for his own good, for his humbling or purging. The Prophet saith concerning *Ephraim*, (*Hos. 7. 9.*) *Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not*: That is, Enemies have swallowed up, or taken away that wealth, those riches, they have subdued those Armies, those Forces, which he looked upon, and boasted of, as his strength; they have broken him quite with Warrs & Invasions, yet *Ephraim* knew it not: and not only so, but as it followeth, *Tea, Gray hairs are here and there upon him*; that is, he hath many Symptoms or Signs of ruine and destruction, yet he knoweth it not. Grief of heart for great changes in our Estate, change the hair; many grow gray with sorrow. So that, when 'tis said gray hairs are upon him, 'tis an allusion taken from the Body Natural to the Body Politick; for as when the natural Body of a man hath gray hairs appearing, or (as *Solomon* allegorizeth, *Eccl. 12. 5.*) *when the Almond Tree flourisheth*, it is an argument that old Age and infirmities are coming upon him (Gray hairs tell us that Death and the Grave are not far off, they signifie some decay of nature.) Now as the natural Body hath its gray hairs, so a Politick Body, the body of a State hath its gray hairs too; that is, something may come upon a State, which sheweth that it is declining and waxing old, that it is ready to break, and go to the Grave. I shall not stay to enquire what are the gray hairs of a Nation; I only bring that Scripture, to prove that many are insensible of the hand of God; he visiteth in his anger, yet man, possibly a good man, knoweth it not, as *Ephraim* knew not of his gray hairs.

But did not *Ephraim* know his affliction? or did not *Job* know his? what is it to know, or who may be said to know an affliction?

I answer, they only know their afflictions, or that God is visiting in his anger,

First, who labour to find out the cause of Gods visitation. If we feel the afflicting hand of God upon us, and enquire not, whence is this? why is it so? what hath moved or provoked the Lord to this manner of proceeding with us? If, I say, we make not such enquiries, we are visited in anger, and know it not. And therefore in that case, the Prophet *Jeremy* exhorts the afflicted, captivated

Church

Church of the *Jewes in Babylon, to search and try their waxes,* (Lam. 3. 41.) that is, to consider why it was so with them, what was the cause of their captivity. Till we sit down and make diligent search, why we are visited, why any affliction or calamity is upon our Persons and Families, or upon the Kingdoms and Nations respectively where we live, we know neither the day of our visitation, nor what our visitation is. Then only we know Gods visitation, when we are studying the causes of it; *To know a thing is to know it in the causes of it.* *Scire est per causas scire.*

Secondly, They may be said to know the visitation of the Lord, that are studying, as the cause which they have given, so the ends and purposes which God hath in visiting them; for how much soever we find and see the causes of an affliction, yet till our hearts are drawn out to answer the ends of it, we do not truly know it.

But you will say, what are the usual ends which the Lord hath in afflicting his people?

I answer, First, to turn them from sin; Secondly, to unglew and wean them from the world; Thirdly, that they may live nearer to, or more with him; Fourthly, that they may live more unto him, or (which takes in both the latter ends) that they may enjoy him more while they live, & honour him more with their lives. Now (I say) till we are upon this kind of study, both of the causes of our visitation, and the ends of it, & beg that we may both remove those causes, & comply with or answer those ends, we may be said not to know the visitation of the Lord, though it be, and we are, in great extremity. And if this be to know the visitation of God, surely many are perishing and sinking under the hand of his visitation, who yet know it not. How many are there, who neither endeavour to search out the causes, nor to fulfil the ends for which the Lord visiteth them in his anger! I conceive this assertion, or supposition at least of *Elihu's* concerning *Job*, both as to his not trusting God in his affliction, and not knowing his visitation, was, though in part true, and occasion'd on *Job's* part, yet over-harsh and severe: nor was the inference which he made from it in the next verse, less severe and harsh.

Vers. 16. *Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain, he multiplyeth words without knowledge.*

Here's the conclusion of *Elihu's* third Discourse with *Job* :

Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain.

Some connect this verse with the former, according to the first reading of it, before mentioned, that giving a reason of this ; But now his anger (or he in anger) hath visited thee but a little, or nothing, &c. *Therefore thou, O Job, openest thy mouth in vain.* As if he had said, *Because the anger of God hath not punished Job sharply enough, nor in proportion to the multitude and greatness of his sins, therefore he speaks thus boldly and rashly.*

Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain.

To open the mouth is a Paraphrasis of speaking ; As if he had said, therefore *Job* speaks in vain. To speak in vain, or to use vain words, is to speak to little or no purpose, as I have had occasion to shew upon other places of this Book (*Chap. 15. 2. Chap. 16. 3.*) and therefore shall not stay upon it here. *Job* was no vain speaker, he used to speak words of weight, words of soberness and truth, yet was overborn by passion, though not to speak vain words in the matter, yet to speak or open his mouth in vain.

Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain. Consider the Inference, therefore, that is, First, Because he doth not humble himself in a patient dependance upon God ; Secondly, because he doth not, as he ought, duly take notice of the purpose of God in visiting him ; Thirdly, because he seems more solicitous and zealous in defending his own right and credit, than the honour and righteousness of God : for all these Reasons he openeth his mouth in vain, that is, he loseth his labour, in all this discourse, and might (as we speak proverbially) have saved his breath to cool his broth : *Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain.* Taking the Charge which *Elihu* brought against *Job* in the former verse, to be well grounded and true, we may Note,

All our complaints to, and debates with God, as also all our Apologies for our selves in affliction, are fruitless and successless, till we give Glory to God, and answer his purposes, in laying his hand upon us.

*Oratio vana
sensu atq; sa-
pientia inopi,*

Unless our hearts bow to God, he will not bow his ear to us.
We only fill the air with words, we are but sounding brass and tinkling

rinking Cimbals in all we say to God, unless we do what God saith. *Elihu* supposing *Job's* spirit yet unsubdued or not wrought and brought into a right frame under his affliction, might well say, *be openeth his mouth in vaine*; and as it followeth to the same effect in the close of this verse and Chapter,

He multiplieth words without knowledge.

Here is another hard censure, upon this good, this holy, and wise man *Job*. Some Expositors fall heavy upon *Elihu*, as charging *Job* too far; he spake (say they) many things that were right, but not rightly; he spake many things that were true, but he did not speak truly in fixing them upon *Job*; he spake all uprightly, but somewhat too rigorously: And indeed, if he had charged him so far, as to say, he had no knowledge at all, and had not opened his mouth at all to purpose, he had charged him beyond both truth and modesty. But *Elihu*, who was set up by God for this very end to humble *Job*, had ground to tell him, that as to some things, he had both *opened his mouth in vaine, and multiplied words without knowledge*; that is, he had spoken many words which seemed not to proceed from any sound or well-grounded knowledge; and I may give a four-fold ground of it.

First, Because he had not sufficiently attended and magnified the Sovereignty of God, in laying those afflictions upon him.

Secondly, Because he had not, as he ought, sat down quietly under the hand of God; but often called to know the cause, and that God would plainly tell him the reason, or give him an account why he suffered: Whereas he should have remembered, that as many of the judgements of God are unsearchable, and his wayes past finding out by man, so he hath reserved some of them as secrets in his own breast, and will no more give any man an account of them, than any man ought to desire an account of them.

Thirdly, Because he had not more considered his sin, or had not been so much in considering the greatness of his sin, as he had been in setting forth the greatness of his integrity. For though it were true which *Job* spake, *that his way was upright*, and though God had given testimony to his uprightness and integrity in all his wayes, yet he should not have insisted so much upon that poynce, which had so much affinity with self-boasting, though he intended it only for self clearing, or for the righting of himself. It had been

more

more becoming him to have been aggravating his sin, than setting forth his righteousness; this was the poynt that *Elihu* struck at, that he had justified himself too much, and judged himself too little. Yea *Job* was convinced of this at last, *Once have I spoken, but I will speak no more*, that is, of my own integrity, or righteousness.

*Inferitiam ob-
jicit quod pug-
nantia, saltem
non tam inter
se coherentia
conjunxit.
Merl:*

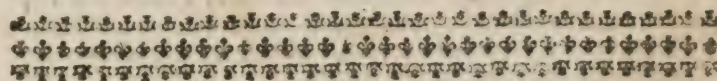
Fourthly, He may be said to have multiplied words without knowledge, because he had spoken so much in the aggravation of his afflictions: 'Tis true, his afflictions were very great; yet *Elihu* censures him deservedly, because he took too much notice of them, complaining often and often, how heavy the hand of God was upon him, yea that God was an enemy to him; whereas he should rather have lookt upon the visitation of God, as light and easie, or (at least) as but little comparatively, to what the Lord was able to lay upon him, or what his sin might justify God in laying upon him. *Elihu* having observed *Job* often and long striking upon that string, hightning his sufferings and troubles, had reason enough not only to call him off from it, but to check him for it. And therefore let us remember and be admonished, that in all our afflictions we should not so much set forth the greatness of our suffering, as the greatness of the mercy of God; we should look upon little mercies as great, (it shews an excellent spirit, when we heighten and greaten the mercy and goodness of God, even in little things) but we should speak of, and look upon our greatest chastenings and afflictions as light, and little. *Job* sayled somewhat in all these things, and in some of them his saylings were great; and upon some of, if not upon all these grounds, I judge *Elihu* gave this judgement upon *Job*; *He openeth his mouth in vaine, and multiplieth words without knowledge.*

Job also yeilded himself thus faulty at last (*Chap. 42. 3.*) *Who is he* (there he speaks of himself in a third person, *Who is he*) *that hideth counsel without knowledge; therefore have I uttered that I understood not, things too wonderfull for me, which I knew not.*

I shall close my thoughts upon this Chapter, with minding the Reader: First, of *Elihu* his candedness towards *Job*, beyond what he found from his other friends; for *Elihu* chargeth *Job* here, only with vanity and inadvertency, not with any premeditated wicked-

wickedness or blasphemy, as *Eliphaz* had done, (*Chap. 22. 13, 14.*) Secondly, let me mind the Reader, of that liberty and plainness of speech which *Elihu* used towards *Job*, in telling him of, and censuring him for his sayings; as also of that patience, meekness, and equanimity, with which *Job* heard, received, and bare his sharpest censures, not replying one word in passion, nor so much as pleading the least excuse for his former passionateness, but taking all in good part, and, doubtless, improving all for his spiritual profit.

J O B,



JOB, Chap. 36. Vers. 1, 2, 3, 4.

1. *Elihu also proceeded, and said,*
2. *Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee, that I have yet to speak on Gods behalf.*
3. *I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.*
4. *For truly my words shall not be false: he that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.*

Elihu hath already made three addressee or speeches to Job, and here he begins a fourth; this and the next Chapter are wholly spent in it, and are the issue of his whole discourse with this sorrowful man. In which we may consider three parts.

First, The Preface, or rather the Prefaces of his speech.

Secondly, The Body or Substance of his Speech.

Thirdly, The Conclusion of it.

The Preface or Prefaces, the Introductions of this Discourse of Elihu with Job, are contained in the foure verses of this Text under hand.

The Body of his Discourse, is begun at the fifth verse inclusively, and continued to the 23d verse of the next Chapter exclusively.

The Conclusion of all, is laid down in the two last verses of the 37 Chapter.

In this copious Discourse or long Oration, Elihu brings not any new assertion, or saying of Job, to be proved against him, nor doth he reprove Job for any new fault, but insists upon the proof of what himself had asserted before, to shew that God is righteous, or to maintain the righteousness of God; which he doth variously by looking through the various works of God, those especially which are wrought on high, the Meteors of the airy region, the
raine,

raine, the ſnow, the lightening, and the thunder, in and by all which, report is made, as of the Wiſdome and Power, ſo of the Juſtice and Righteouſneſſe of God, who often declareth his mind to Mankind by thoſe Teachers, and proclaims by their mouths (as it were by ſound of Trumpet) how terrible he is, and will be to wilful and impenitent ſinners. That's the ſumme of his Argumentation, or the Scope of this his laſt undertaking with *Job*.

Verſ. 1. *Elihu alſo proceeded, and ſaid.*

This is the Pen-man's Preface, he makes the Connexion thus between the former and this diſcourſe; *Elihu alſo proceeded, and ſaid*: The Hebrew is, *Elihu added*, that is, to his former ſpeeches he added this. We render the word *he continued*, (Chap. 23. 1.) *Elihu alſo proceeded, or continued his ſpeech, and ſaid*; and what ſaid he? that begins at the next verſe.

Verſ. 2. *Suffer me a little, and I will ſhew thee, that I have yet to ſpeak on Gods behalf.*

Here begins *Elihu's* own Preface, the aim or tendency of which is to gain *Job's* attention and ſubſcription to what he had to ſay, and he ſuggeſteth four Arguments or Morives in theſe three Verſes, to draw out the attention of *Job*, and likewise to gain his ſubmiſſion to what he ſhould lay before him.

Fiſt, He gives him an Argument from his intended brevity, I'll be ſhort, I mean not to be tedious, I will nor tire thee, nor wear out thy patience with a long Diſcourſe: *Suffer me a little.*

His ſecond Argument is taken from the greatneſſe of the Perſon, in whoſe name and behalf he was about to ſpeak: As if he had ſaid, Hear me, for it is not my own Cauſe, nor the Cauſe of any man that I have in hand, I ſpeak for God, *Suffer me a little, and I will ſhew thee, what I have yet to ſay for God.*

His third Argument is taken from the Authority in which he would ſpeak. Hear me diligently, for what I have to ſay, is not only for God, but from God; *I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and aſcribe righteouſneſſe to my Maker*, verſ. 3.

Fourthly, Which is a neceſſary Conſequent of the former two, he would be heard, becauſe he reſolved (and hoped he ſhould make good that reſolution) to ſpeak the truth, and nothing but the truth; he offers this at the 4th Verſe, *For truly my words*

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Hoc ſignificatu chaldaicum eſt.
Druf.

Nihil vulgare,
nihil non magnum dicam.
Sanct.

shall not be false, he that is perfect in knowledge is with thee. These are the four Arguments contained in this Preface, by which Elihu like a wise perswasive Orator, would draw on the attention of Job in hearing, and gain his approbation in receiving what he had to say. We may gather up the spirit and substance of all his Arguments into this one.

He is to be patiently heard, and readily assented to, who intends to speak but a little, and that little for God, and that little from God, and that in truth, and nothing but the truth.

But what I am now about to speak shall be but little, and that for God, and from God, and that in truth and nothing but the truth;

Therefore I am to be heard patiently, &c.

Suffer me a little.

Sic circa mo
paululum.
Mont.

¶ Parum
modicum est
tempus et
quantitas dif-
cretæ.

Some render, *stand, or stay about me*; that is, have patience a while, be not hasty. Impatient persons will be gone, they will not abide by it, to hear another out. Our Translation reaches this sense fully (according to the Idiom of our Language) *Suffer me a little.* The word which we render *little*, may referre either to the littleness or brevity of his Speech, or to the littleness of the space or time which he would spend in speaking; we joyn both here; as if he had said, *I will not speak much, and therefore I shall not take up much of your time.* The word is used by the Prophet with an addition, (*Isa. 10. 25.*) *Yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction*; that is, in the destruction of the enemies of my People. As if he had said, *My wrath shall not abide, it shall not last long, nor continue upon my People; and when I have done with them, it shall be turned upon their enemies and oppressors, the Assyrians, and towards them it shall not cease, till they are utterly overturned.* Take one instance more in the same Prophet, nearer the business of the Text in Job. (*Isa. 28. 10, 11.*) *Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept, here a Little, and there a Little, or now a little, and then a little.* They shall not be overburdened, they shall have it by drops, by inches, by little and little, as they are able to bear; just as children and young Novices are taught, who cannot receive much at once, but now a letter and then a letter, now a rule, and then a rule.

Possibly

Possibly *Elihu* perceived *Job* was not in a case to hear much, and therefore condescending to his weak condition by reason of his long sufferings, he saith to him, *Suffer me a little.*

Yet further, I conceive, when *Elihu* saith to *Job*, *Suffer me a little*, it may signifie one of these two things, or both of them. First, That *Job* had given him some interruption as he was speaking before. It is usual with us, if when a man is speaking, any interpose, to say, *Pray suffer me a while*, you shall have your liberty to object or reply what you please when I have done. Secondly, That he had shewed some dissatisfaction with what *Elihu* had spoken fully out, or when he had done speaking, and therefore he desired that he might further cleer the matter, and speak out his mind, yea, at least, a little more, if it might be to his full satisfaction, and the removal of all his doubts. *Suffer me a little.*

Lay all these things together, and they will teach us a poynt of prudence, so to compose and compact what we have to say, that it may not be grievous or burthensome to those that hear us, especially not to those who (as *Job* was) are already grieved in mind, or body, or both. As the Spirit of God, lest the Faith and Patience of his People should fail in sufferings, telleth, yea assureth them, it is but a little while that they shall suffer; relief, or deliverance, and which is more, the Reliever, the Deliverer, is making hast towards them, (*Heb. 10. 27.*) *Yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry*; as the Spirit of God (I say) doth thus nurse up the Faith of his People in suffering times: so we had need to nurse up the attentions of our Hearers at all times, but then chiefly when they are under any kind of suffering, and say, yet a little, suffer us a little, we will not burthen you much. There are two things of admirable use in speaking. First, Brevity. Secondly, Perspicuity. 'Tis true, that they that strive to be short, prove very obscure; yet doubtless, 'tis no very hard thing, in most matters, to joyn perspicuity with brevity, and to give a clear sense in a few words. And though it be a truth, That when we have said much of God, and of the things of God, we have said but little, yea, that when we have spoken out all, there remains infinitely more to be spoken, yet we should as much as may be, aim at brevity, especially where the Person spoken to is weak, and unfitted by bodily indispositions to hear much. *Suffer me a little,*

And I will shew thee, &c.

*¶ Anagram
et fustorem rei
elucidationem
et declaratio-
nem importat:
Bold.*

That is, I will make all plain to thee, I will give thee a full declaration of my mind, and I hope of the truth, I will set all before thee, that so upon a review thou mayest the easier apprehend my sense, and give thy sentence about it. *Day unto day uttereth speech*, (saith David, Psal. 19. 2.) *and night unto night sheweth knowledge.* 'Tis this word, and it notes a very plain and evident manifestation of that which is offered to be known; the very night carrieth a light in it concerning the glory of God; *I will shew thee*

That I have yet to speak on Gods behalf.

*Dativus ver-
bis additur in-
dicat honorem
et cultum, lo-
qui Deo, est
non solum pro
Deo defenden-
do, sed etiam
honorificando
sermonem assu-
mere. Bold.*

Some read *for God*, or *to God*; that is for the glory of God, or to the honour of God, in the clearing up of his righteousness, against those blemishes which thy speech, if not intentionally, yet consequentially, hath cast upon it; I will speak that which may both convince thee, and justifie God. The Original Text strictly is thus, *I will shew thee that there are yet words for God*; that is, I will make it appear that many things more may be said and proved in pursuance of this Poynt, for thy further humiliation under the mighty hand of God, and for the Lords vindication in all his dealings with thee. *I speak for God*: Nor was this a meer pretence, or a vain boast, as I find some Expositors (I conceive very causelessly) charging *Elihu*, as if here he published a zeal to speak for God, that he might gain applause, or draw a reverence upon himself, in what he had to speak. Some ('tis granted) have cryed up the Name of God, when they closely aimed at their own: But doubtless, *Elihu* was honest and plain hearted, when he said, that what he had to say was for God; as he pretended, so he was really for God; *I have yet to speak on Gods behalf.*

*Quia sepe ar-
rogantes sibi
sentium silentii
reverentiam
non debere, Do-
mini non nun-
quam potenti-
am, de quo
quasi loquuntur
insinuant, &c.
Greg. in Loc.*

Hence Observe, First;

It is a mans honour, as well as his duty, to be an Advocate for God.

As it is mans comfort, his choicest comfort, that God hath provided an Advocate for him, that he hath found out one to speak to himself in our behalf, namely, Jesus Christ; so it is both the duty and honour of man, to be an Advocate for God.

For

For if, First, it be a great honour to know God, and to have God made known to us; *He hath not dealt so with any Nation* (as he dealt with the Jews, in giving them the knowledge of his mind) *and as for his Judgements they have not known them,* (Psal. 147. 20.)

Secondly, It is a greater honour to believe, and obey according to what we know, then

Thirdly, When we know, when we believe and obey, our greatest honour of all is to plead for, and stand up in Gods behalf, to undertake (being called) the defence of his truth and of his wayes, to *contend earnestly for the Faith, once* (by God) *delivered to the Saints,* which is indeed the only good contention. Paul saith (Phil. 1. 17.) *I am set for the defence of the Gospel.* Paul was a Champion ready to cope and buckle with all comers for Christ or the Gospel; and therefore at the 20th verse of the same Chapter, he saith, the great thing he lookt after was, *That Jesus Christ might be magnified in his body, whether by life, or by death.* There are three wayes whereby we appear as Advocates on Gods behalf; First, By saying, or arguing; Secondly, By doing or practising; Thirdly, By enduring and suffering; and by all Christ is *magnified in our body*; the two former wayes, by life, the latter by death, or by that which bears the Image of it. There is nothing needs a fuller measure of defence for God, than the Truth of God; and we never stand up so fully on Gods behalf, as when we stand for his Truth, though our selves fall. To speak and do on Gods behalf, is most for our own behoof, though we get but small fees or wages, yea though we lose our all in this world for such speaking and doing. I could wish there were not too much cause of complaint, that God hath not many to speak on his behalf, and that Christ Jesus, our great, our only Advocate with God, hath few Advocates among men. When God as it were calls to us, *Who is on my side? who?* Truly there are but few that will appear for him, that is, for Truth, for Holiness, for holy Worship; few appear for these things when differences arise about them. The corrupt part of the world in any Age will not, and the better part are not so free as they ought, to speak and appear (in such Cases) on Gods behalf. *The world* (saith St. John in the Revelation) *worshipped after the Beast;* & he cannot want Advocates, who hath so many Admirers. But as the Admirers, so the Advocates
of

of the Lamb are not many, they are only a sealed, a selected Company. We can be very warm in speaking in our own Cause, and on our own behalf; but how cold and dead-hearted are we when we come to speak in the behalf of God! what a sad withdrawing is there from that duty! God stands up often on the behalf of his People, and owns them in their need, yet few own God, or the Truth of God, when there is most need. Remember, as it is our honour, so our duty to speak on Gods behalf; and they will come to a bad reckoning at last both for their doings and speakings, for the work both of hand and tongue, who have done and spoken much in their own behalf, and little or nothing on Gods.

Again, As *Elihu* makes this an Argument to provoke *Job* to hear him patiently,

Note,

They that speak for God, ought to have audience.

It is an Argument commanding attention, to say, I speak from God, or for God. As when the Lord himself speaks, all ought to hear; even those things that have no ears, are call'd upon to hear him speaking, or what is spoken from him, *Hear O Heavens, and hearken O Earth*, saith the Lord (*Isa. 1. 2.*) Now, as when the Lord speaks all should hear, so all should hear when any thing is spoken on the Lords behalf; they that speak for the Lord in truth, speak also from the Lord. As truth bears the stamp and Image of God, so it tends to the glory of God. To resist the truth of God, spoken by a true Messenger, is to refuse the God of truth, (*Luke 10. 16.*) *He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me.* Not to hear those that speak for the Lord, and from the Lord, is indeed not to hear the Lord, and so they will be judged in the great day.

Thirdly, In that *Elihu* gathers up his Spirits, girds up the Loins of his mind upon this consideration, that he was to speak on Gods behalf,

Note,

They who speak for God, may speak with courage, and be bold.

If any thing can encourage us to, and in a work, 'tis this, that we engage for God. That which puts spirit and life into us, is our end

end and design in doing or speaking; now this is the highest end or design, to argue for God; and therefore it may put the highest life, and liveliest spirits into man, it may make him that is weak, strong as a Gyant, and him that is fearful, bold as a Lyon, when he can speak in truth, that he is speaking truth on Gods behalf.

I will shew thee that I have yet to speak.

That word (yet) hath a great Emphasis in it; he had been speaking in Gods behalf before, and sayes he, *I have yet to speak.*

Observe,

They that truly begin to speak for God, will persevere in speaking for God.

As when we have spoken our all of God, and for God, there is yet more to be spoken of him, and for him (God is an everlasting Argument, a Subject that can never be finished) so they who have begun (with an honest heart and right aims) to speak for God, will hold on and never give over to speak for him, while they have a call to it. A soul toucht with true zeal, finds it hard to make an end, when once he hath begun so good, and so honorable a service, as to speak for God. So much of the second Argument used by *Elihu* to gain attention: *Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee what I have yet to speak on Gods behalf.* He spake for God. The third followeth.

Vers. 3. *I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe Righteousnesse to my Maker.*

This (I say) is *Elihu's* third Argument brought to the same purpose as before.

I will fetch my knowledge from afar,

Or a great way off. From how far? There are four notions under which knowledge may be said to be fetcht from afar.

First, That's knowledge from afar, which is of things out of sight, or invisible, of things which not only are not, but cannot be seen. As if *Elihu* had said, *I will not discourse about such things as fall under common sensitive observation, I will not speak of eye-objects, but of that and such things, as no eye hath seen, nor can see,*

למרחק
et longinquo
ex abundanti,
ex lingua idi-
omate adjici-
tur. Merc.
Dicit scientia
quidam longe-
petita. Vatab.
of

of God, and of Divine things, the things of God.

Secondly, *From afar*, may imply this, I will not treat about matters of a late Date or Edition, but of things done long since. Thus David prefac'd his Speech, (*Psal. 68. 2, 3.*) *I will open my mouth in a Parable, I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard, and known, and our Fathers have told us.* Such things are far off from us, which were transacted and done a great while ago, or in former Ages, or in the first Age. As if *Elihu* had said, *I'll fetch my knowledge, not from yesterday, but from ancient times, from the very beginning of the Creation, or from the Foundation of the world; such things are truly afar off; or, I will fetch my knowledge from those things which were before the beginning; that's more truly afar off.* Thus a Learned Translator glosseth upon the Text, *I will speak even of those things which were before any thing visible was, even from Eternity.* The things of Eternity are most proper to set forth and illustrate the honour of God, and most

lively expresse his Power and Divine Perfections.

Thirdly, When he saith, *I will fetch my knowledge from afar*; the meaning may be this, It shall be of admirable and sublime things, the reason of which could not easily be given, nor presently found out. Those things are far from us, which we cannot dive into, nor reach, nor fathome the bottome of, by the Line of our understanding: Such are the secret Counsels of God before the world was, and some wayes of his Providence in dealing with men ever since the world was, which are therefore said to be unsearchable, and past finding out; and of these *Elihu* speaks at large in this Chapter, to the 26th verse.

Fourthly, *I will fetch my knowledge from afar*, may be thus understood, I will speak to thee of things which I have much studied for; I will not speak what comes next, nor what lyes uppermost, but will beat my brains for what I say, in most serious meditation; I will not offer thee any raw or undigested sentiments, but shall well and maturely consider before I speak; nor will I speak what my weak reason only tells me is true, but what by light from above, and I hope by the special teachings of God, I know to be true: I will fetch my knowledge, or that which I make known, from the depths of my heart, not from sudden flashes and conceits of my head. In all these senses possibly *Elihu* was resolved to fetch his knowledge from afar, he would

not

Prout res fuit
non tantum in
de a secula, sed
etiam ante om-
nia secula.
Jun.

Ex operibus
Dei admiran-
dis et sublimi-
bus. Merc.

Ex remotis sed
necessariis
principiis a-
gam, non na-
liter excogi-
tata sed prin-
cipio cognita, et
accurate pre-
meditata pro-
feram. Scult.

not take up, nor trouble *Job* with things that were obvious, common, or easie to be had, but bring what he had to say out of the closest Cabinets, and utter conceptions, which were most remote from the common road.

There is yet another apprehension concerning *Elihu's* purpose, when he saith, *I will fetch my knowledge from afar*, with which I rather close than any of the former; that his meaning was to speak to *Job* of those things, which as they are not easily comprehended, because the sublimest works of God in nature, so because they might seem far from the present matter; As if he had said, We have been arguing all this while about Gods dispensations here below, but now I'll speake of things that are wrought above, of those both useful and dreadful or terrible Meteors, the snow and raine, the windes, the lightening and the thunder; these things may be thought very forreigne and heterogeneal, very far off from the businels in hand, but I will speak to thee of these things, even of the works of God in the Heavens, in the Air, in the Chambers of the Clouds, and I will convince thee by what God doth there above, of his righteousness, in what he doth here below. The wisdom and power of God, in ordering those natural works in the Clouds, and in the Air, prove that man hath no cause to complain about his providential works on earth: For as those wonderful visible works of God are real demonstrations of those invisible things of God, his eternal power and God-head, so they declare both his righteousness and goodness, his wrath and mercy towards the children of men in the various dispensations of them. And so although those things might be thought far from the poynt which *Elihu* supposed *Job* questioned, at least by consequences, the righteousness of God in his severe dealings with him, yet indeed they contained principles or general grounds, by which that which *Elihu* had engaged to maintain might be fully confirmed and unanswerably concluded. This, I conceive, is the special *afar off*, that *Elihu* intended to fetch his knowledge from, as may appear in the close of this Chapter, and in the next, quite thorow. *I will fetch my knowledge from afar.*

Hence note;

First, *The natural works of God, or the works of God in nature, are to be studied and searched out.*

As the works of grace are afar off from all men, in a state of nature; so the works of God in nature, are very far off from the most of men; they know little of Gods works in the Heavens, or in the Earth, in the Sea, or in the Aire, yet all these are to be searched out with diligence by the sons of men.

Secondly, Note;

The works of Creation and Providence, shew that God is, and what he is.

We may see who God is, in what he hath done; we say *things are in their working, as they are in their being.* God hath done like himself in all that he hath done; his own works (as well as his own Word) speak him best, (*Psal. 19. 1.*) *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work, &c.* The raine and snow declare the power of God, Thunder and Lightening shew what he can do.

Thirdly, Note;

Knowledge is worth our longest travel, it will quit cost to go far for it.

We say, Some things are far fetcht, and dear bought; true knowledge, especially the knowledge of Jesus Christ deserves to be far fetcht, and it cannot be too dear bought; we must drive a strange kind of trade with the truths of God; we must be alwayes buying, and never selling, yet that's a commodity will never lye upon our hands, never brayde. If we were to fetch our knowledge from afar, as to the distance of place, we should not think much of it. The Queen of the South fetcht her knowledge from afar, she came a very great way, undertook a long journey, to hear the wisdom of Solomon; in that sense we should be willing to fetch our knowledge from afar; yet some will scarce step over the threshold to fetch in knowledge. It is prophesied (*Dan. 12. 4.*) *Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.* Knowledge ought to be travell'd for as much as any thing in the world. We fetch our gold and silver, and rich Commodities, afar off, we go to the ends of the Earth for them, through a thousand deaths and dangers; we sayle within three inches of death for many moneths together, to fetch worldly riches from afar off; and shall we not fetch knowledge afar off, how far soever it is from

from us in diſtance of place, and what labour or coſt ſoever we beſtow to fetch it in ? *I will fetch my knowledge from afar,*

I will aſcribe righteouſneſs to my Maker.

Theſe words contain the ground, purpoſe, or deſigne of *Elihu* in this whole diſcourſe, which was to maintain the righteouſneſs of God ; *I* (ſaith he) *will aſcribe* (the Hebrew ſtrictly is *give*) *righteouſneſs to my Maker* ; here's a very great undertaking , to give righteouſneſs to God ; God gives and imputes righteouſneſs to us ; 'Tis the ſumme of the Goſpel, that God imputes or aſcribes righteouſneſs to ſinners : Now as God in a Goſpel ſenſe, gives righteouſneſs to us, both the righteouſneſs of juſtification, which is lodged in the perſon of Chriſt, and the righteouſneſs of ſanctification, which is lodged in our own perſons, though the ſpring and principle of that alſo be in Chriſt ſtill ; ſo we muſt give righteouſneſs to God ; that is, both believe and declare or publiſh to all the world, that God is juſt, and give him the praiſe of his juſtice, which is the beſt and nobleſt work we can do on Gods behalf in this world. There are two moſt excellent works, which indeed contain all our work in this world.

First, To do righteouſly, or aſt righteouſneſs our ſelves. Secondly, To aſcribe righteouſneſs unto God.

But you will ſay, what is it to give or aſcribe righteouſneſs to God ?

I anſwer, It is to acknowledge, that God is righteous in all his wayes, and holy in all his works. 'Tis mans duty to juſtifie God, to aſcribe that righteouſneſs to him, which is properly his own. 'Tis Gods grace, his free-grace to juſtifie man, to aſcribe that righteouſneſs to him which is properly anothers. *David* made profeſſion of the former as his duty, (*Pſal. 50. 3, 4.*) *I acknowledge my tranſgreſſions, and my ſin is ever before me ; that thou mighteſt be juſtified in thy ſayings, and clear when thou judgeſt :*

That is, I'll confeſs my ſin, that all the world may ſee the righteouſneſs of thy dealings with me, though thou ſhouldeſt deale never ſo ſeverely with me, though thou ſhouldeſt ſpeak the bittereſt things againſt me, & pronounce a ſentence of heaviſt judgement upon me. The Apoſtle referring to this place in the *Pſalmes*, quotes the words in a paſſive forme and ſenſe, not of God judging man, but of God judged by man, (*Rom. 3. 4.*) *Let God be true,*

Is qui peccat et confitetur deo peccatum juſtificat deum, edens ei vincen- centi et ab eo gratiam ſperans. Ambroſ: 1. 6. in Luc:

Quid est tū
 agere cum
 deus meo qui
 deus iudicio ne-
 cessario expli-
 candum est, ut
 Græca Hebræ-
 a respondeant.
 Bez: in Rom:
 3. 4.

true, but every man a lyar; as it is written, that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. As if David had said, according to the Apostles reading out of the Septuagint, (which yet as learned Beza in his Annotations affirmeth, ought to be expounded actively, as if, I say, David had thus expressed himself) Lord, I know some men will take the boldness to question thee, yea and to condemn thee of rigour, when they see thy afflicting hand heavy upon me; therefore, either to prevent such rash judgements of man, or that thou mayest gaine the day, and have the better in the opinion of all good and wise men, over thy Judges, Behold, I here freely confess my great sin, with all the aggravating circumstances of it, and surely they who know, or shall hear, how greatly I have sinned against thee, cannot but justify thee, how great soever my sufferings may be. To speak thus is to ascribe righteousness unto God, in all that he doth, whether with respect to his publique judgements upon Nations, or particular, upon persons, in any way of affliction he is pleased, and seeth need, to exercise them with.

And the reason why *Job* was here charged by *Elihu* as a person not giving righteousness to God, was, because he did not sit down quietly and patiently under his hand in sufferings, but muttered and complained as a man unsatisfied with, though he did not openly murmur against the dealings of God with him. To give righteousness to God, is not only, not to accuse him as unrighteous and unjust, but to thank him for, and honour him in all that he doth, or to speak good of his Name, under all our sufferings of evil. Further, to ascribe righteousness to God, is to justify him, though he give never so much prosperity to unjust and wicked men (*Jer. 12. 1.*) Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet let me talke with thee of thy judgements. Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Some begin to think, surely God is not righteous, when they see the unrighteous prosper, and at rest, while righteous ones are afflicted with continual hurries and troubles; but whatsoever God doth with us or ours, whatsoever peace he gives to wicked men, whatsoever trouble to good men, he is still righteous; and to acknowledge this sincerely, is actually to do what *Elihu* undertakes to do, even to ascribe righteousness to our Maker. And surely that knowledge will quit the cost, though

though we have fetcht it very far, by which we are taught, and have learn'd to ascribe righteousness (for that's the ascribing of glory) to our Maker. *I (saith Elihu) will ascribe righteousness*

To my Maker.

There's something in that expression very considerable; *Elihu* doth not say, I will ascribe righteousness to God, but speaks of God under that relation, *His Maker*. The word signifies not only in General to make or create, of which work *Moses* treats in the first of *Genesis*, but it notes the doing of a thing, first, with diligence, secondly, with skill & great intention of mind, 'tis to draw all our spirits together in a work, as Artists do; This divine art or skill did chiefly appear and shine forth in the creation or formation of man. Not that God straines himself in any work, but he speaks thus, to shew that the highest perfections and exactness imaginable, yea beyond all imagination, were centred and laid into the works of God, or the things that he hath made. *will ascribe righteousness to*

702 importat
facere aliquid
cum intentione
diligentia ener-
gia quæ valde
emittit informa-
tione hominū.
Bold:

My Maker.

He doth not say, *to the Maker of man*, or to the Maker of Heaven and Earth, but to *my Maker*; he appropriates that common work of God to himself. God is the maker of every Creature, the least worme, the least fly is of his making, yet *Elihu* speaks of it as his peculiar priviledge, *my Maker*.

There's a great Emphasis of affection in those Pronounes, *Mine, Thine, His*. *Elihu* in this *my* intimates a friendly sweetness and closeness of relation between God and him. To call another *Mine*, is more than to call him a friend of mine; And to say, God is *my Maker*, is more than to say, He is the maker of me, or the maker of my soul and body. 'Tis the Dialect of lovers: When we love we call *Ours*. It is so in the writings of Heathen Poets and Orators. One of them said, *I must do this with the gifts of mine*, that is, of my friends; and another, *I only am my to mine*. Much love reignes in this Language of faith up and down the Scriptures, chiefly in those raptures of divine delight between Christ and the Spouse in the Book of *Canticles*. *Elihu* is here greatly affected, as with the righteousness of God in all his works, so in the workmanship bestowed on him: *I (saith he) will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.*

Delicata sunt hæc pronomina Meum, Tuum, Suum, et plena affectionis; pronomem hoc substantivè ponitur pro amico. Dulcesq; meorum reliquias. Virgil: Æneid: 4. Ego meorum solus sum meus. Terent:

Hence

Hence Note ;

First, *God is the Maker of man.*

I shall not stay upon that.

Secondly, In that he holds himself engag'd to stand up for God as his Maker,

Note,

The Common benefites of God to man, should be acknowledged, and he honoured for them.

God hath made man and beast, and he preserves man and beast. A godly man sees peculiar mercy to him in both, though they be common mercies. *General mercies should have, they highly deserve, special remembrances.* All the works of God are to be lookt to as personal engagements. God hath made others as well as thee, yet so remember him to be thy Maker, as if he had made none but thee ; and indeed every one that is made, is as much beholding to God, as if he alone had been made. As some things which are made in common for all men (the Sun, the Air, &c.) are so made, that no man could have more of them than he hath, if they had been made for him only : So though it be common to all men, that God is their Maker, yet no man could have more in his making, if none had been made but he. One of the Ancients represents all the Creatures offering themselves to man, in general, and speaking these three words : First, *Receive us cheerfully*, for we were made for thee ; Secondly, *Render thanks for us daily*, for we are all made useful unto thee ; Thirdly, *Take heed you do not abuse us*, for you must give an account to our Maker and yours, how you have used us. And surely, as we should strive to honour God for all things which he hath made, so mostly for our own making. The Lord is often (in the Old Testament especially) spoken of under this Relation (*Psal. 121. 2.*) *Our help standeth in the Name of the Lord, who made Heaven and Earth.* (So *Psal. 124. 8.* *Psal. 95. 6.* *Psal. 146. 6.*) Still God is remembred as the Maker of all things ; and he is thus remembred, not only in opposition to Idols, or false gods, who are gods made by man, not the makers of man, but God is thus remembred and recorded in Scripture, to preserve a grateful memory of God in man, as he is the Maker of man. He that forgets God as his Maker, will never remember, much less
answer

Accipe,
Redde,
Cave.

answer and accomplish the ends for which he was made.

Thirdly, *I will ascribe righteousness to*

My Maker.

Note, *A godly man takes God as his own, and appropriates him by Faith in all his Relations.*

Faith takes not only a share in God, but all of God; *My God, my Father, my Maker, my Redeemer, are strains of Faith.* A Believer doth as it were ingross God to himself, yet desires and endeavours, that all, as well as himself, may have their part and portion in God, yea God for their Portion. Job said (Chap. 19. 25.) *I know that my Redeemer liveth:* He spake as if he had got a Redeemer, not only so, but by himself. Thus also holy Paul of Christ, (Gal. 2. 21) *Who loved me, & gave himself for me; as if he had been given for him alone, and loved none but him.* This is the highest work of Faith, and 'tis the signification of our hottest love to God, it shews endearedness of affection to him, as well as nearness and clearness of interest in him, when we thus take him as our own Saviour, Father, Maker. *I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.*

Observe, Fourthly;

He who is the Maker of all men, can be unrighteous to no man, nor is lyable to the censure of any man, whatever he doth.

'Tis impossible that he who made us should wrong or injure us, and that upon a twofold Principle; First, Of the respect he hath for Justice towards all those whom he hath made. God is so tender, that he doth not willingly (or with his heart) afflict, nor grieve the children of men, to crush under his feet all the Prisoners of the earth (Lam. 3. 33, 34.) much less will he (as it followeth, vers. 35, 36.) *turn away the right of a man before the face of the most High,* that is, before his own face, who is the Most High: As if it had been said, The Lord will not pervert Judgment in any mans Case, that comes before him. Or, if we take those words *before the face of the Most High,* as denoting the highest Judicatory on Earth, as our Margin intimates, putting there, for *Most High, A Superior;* then the meaning is, The Lord doth not approve, that
any

any earthly Judge, though Supream, or most Superiour, should take aside the right of a man, how inferiour soever; for, as the 36th verse hath it, *To subvert a man in his Cause, the Lord approveth not*; or, as the Hebrew is rendred, *seeth not*, that is, he seeth it not with approbation, but indeed with detestation, and will severely punish such subverters of Justice. Secondly, It is impossible that he who hath made us should wrong or injure us, upon the principle of his Sovereignty over all those whom he hath made. He that gives all men their being, he that gives all to all men that are in being, can be unrighteous to no man, whatsoever he taketh from him, or doth with him. We have *Job* in the beginning of this Book (*Chap. 1. 21.*) ascribing righteousness to God his Maker upon this reason, or principle, *The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord.* It is he that made me a man, 'tis he who once made me a rich man, a great man, *the greatest man of all the men of the East,* (*Chap. 1. 3.*) What if now he hath lessened me, and left me little or nothing? what if he hath now made me a mean man, a poor man (in account) a no man? what if God hath now stript me naked, and taken all from me? He hath taken nothing but what he gave; why then should I take it ill at his hands, or have so much as an ill thought of him? the Lord gives, and the Lord takes; there's no unrighteousness in all this. If God should utterly undo us, he doth us no wrong; if he should as it were, unmake us, let us consider he is our Maker, & then we must say, there is no unrighteousness in him, yea we shall be ready (with *Elihu* in the Text) to ascribe righteousness unto him. And therefore, as a Corollary from the whole,

Note, Fifthly;

Whatsoever God doth with us, or others, we ought to maintain the honour of God, and retain good thoughts of him, both as righteous and good.

Though Heaven and Earth be moved, though the World be full of confusion and unrighteousness, yet we must ascribe righteousness to God. Whatsoever or whosoever falls to the dust, the Honour and Justice of God must not. Thus far of *Elihu's* third Argument for attention; the Fourth is at hand in the next verse.

Vers.

Verf. 4. *For truly my words shall not be false; he that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.*

As if he had said, *I am purposed to speak the truth, and nothing but the truth; therefore hear me. Truly my words shall not be false.* He gives assurance for, or warrants the truth of his words, while he saith, they shall not be false. Negatives in Scripture often carry a strong affirmation. *The Father of a Fool hath no joy, saith Solomon* (Prov. 17. 21.) that is, he shall have a great deal of sorrow.

When the Scripture denyeth forgiveness to any sort of impenitent sinners, or saith, their sin shall not be forgiven, the sense is, they shall be punished. When we say proverbially, *Goods ill gotten shall not prosper*, the meaning is, they shall perill, and do him mischief that hath gotten them; not only shall he not thrive with them, but they shall ruine and undoe him; his goods ill gotten, shall do him no good when the evill day is come, much less shall they be able, or he by them, to prevent the coming of an evill day. Once more: When we say, *Such a thing is not ill done*, our intendment is, 'tis very well done, excellently done. So here, when *Elihu* saith, *Truly my words shall not be false*, his meaning is, I will speak truth, and truth to the highest, I will speak nothing but what shall endure the Touchstone and the Test; I will not offer thee a Syllable of falshood; what I alledge and urge either for God, or against thee, shall not be fercht or hammer'd out of my own brain, and so subject to error and mistake, but such as God, who cannot erre (by whose Spi. it, and in whose stead, I speak unto thee) hath inspired me with, or taught me for thy conviction and instruction.

Fourthly, When he saith, *Truly, my words shall not be false*, we may take it two wayes: First, As to the matter spoken; Secondly, As to the mind of the Speaker: when truth is thus spoken, 'tis truly spoken; thus much *Elihu* engag'd for: As if he had said, *The matter that I speak, shall be true, and I will speak it in truth, or with a true mind and heart; I will not speak any thing to flatter thee, nor for my own ends, to trouble thee; my words shall be candid and sincere, as well as sound and orthodox: I will speak the truth, and speak it in truth.* Some speak that which is false (as I may say) in the sincerity of their heart, thinking it to be true; and

X

others

*Non est enim
pro passim
est: si non re-
mittatur ei, i. e.
punitur.
Draf.*

others speak truth in the falseness of their heart, that is, they have some by ends in speaking it; from both those *Elihu* here clears himself, and with both these *Job* had taxed his Friends, Chap. 13. 7. Chap. 17. 5.

Hence observe;

It is the highest Commendation of a Speaker, to speak truth, and the higher the Truth, the higher the Commendation of the Speaker.

Words can have no greater beauty, nor richer ornament, than Truth, and Truth is never more adorn'd, than by plainness of Speech, nor more beautiful, than when (like our first Parents in innocency) 'tis naked. *To speak truly, is much more honourable, than to speak eloquently; one plain word of plain truth, is better than a long painted Oration, tingured with the least error: What then are long Orations, and large Volumes, which have, upon the matter, as many errors as words, as many lyes and flatteries, as Periods and Sentences!* at best, some in putting off their words, do as others in putting off their wares, mingle good and bad together. 'Tis dangerous to make such madlies. As we must not put bad for good, darkness for light, bitter for sweet, falshood for Truth, so we must not blend or put bad among the good, nor mix darkness with light, nor falshood with Truth. And as 'tis dangerous to mix any falshood of Doctrine with Truth, so to mix falshood of Heart, with Truth of Doctrine, or to speak Truth, but not in truth. The Apostle is zealous in protesting against falshood, and professing for the Truth, in both these respects; First, as to the truth of the Doctrine, or of the matter spoken, (2 Cor. 2. 17.) *We are not as many, which corrupt (or deal deceitfully with) the Word of God; we do not adulterate or mix it with our own imaginations or inventions; which he further confirms (Chap. 4. 2.) We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, &c.* Secondly, As he spake truth of Doctrine, so he spake it in the truth of his heart, as he assured the *Corinthians*, in both the places last mentioned; we are, not only no corrupters of the Word of God, but as of sincerity (there's truth of heart) as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ. And again, *We walk not in craftiness, nor handle the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commend our selves to every mans Con-*
science,

ſcience, in the ſight of God. He makes a proteſt yet once more in the ſame tenour, and ſomewhat higher, (2 Cor. 13. 8.) *We can do nothing againſt the Truth; O bleſſed Impotency! but for the Truth; O bleſſed Ability!* Who would not be weak againſt the Truth? who would not be ſtrong for the Truth, which is ſtrongeſt of all, and will prevail? And as we ſhould ſpeak nothing againſt the Truth; ſo nothing but the Truth, nothing beſide the Truth, nothing that may be any blemiſh, or turn to the leaſt diſſervice of the Truth; yea, though it ſhould be (as we hope) for the ſervice of that excellent and amiable thing called *Peace*; a thing ſo excellent, that we cannot over-bid, nor pay too much for it, unleſs we part with, and pay away truth for it: and if ever we do ſo, we over-bid for it, and over-buy it indeed, and ſhall have cauſe at laſt to repent of our bargain, and cry out, *we have burnt our Fingers*, and it would be well if that were all. Therefore let us remember the Lords admonition by his Prophet (Zech. 8. 19.) *Love the Truth and Peace*: Firſt, Truth, then Peace. Nor was there ever any true Lover of Truth, that was not alſo a Lover of Peace; nor any true Lover of Peace, but was ſuch a Lover of Truth, that he could lay down, or let go, his Peace for it. One of the Ancients tells us, There ought to be ſo great a love of Truth in us, that, whatſoever we ſay to be true, ſhould be as much as if we had ſworn it to be true, or had delivered it upon Oath. There is no more goodneſs in what we ſay, than there is Truth in what we ſay. A Lye in report or Diſcourſe, and a Lye in Doctrine or Diſpute, are both abominable to God, and ſhould be ſo to man; therefore *Elihu* heartily diſclaims it, *Truly my words ſhall not be falſe.*

*Tantus ſit in te
veritatis amor,
ut quicquid di-
sceris, juratum
putes. Hieron.*

He that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.

This Aſſertion ſuits well with the fore-going Proteſtation: He that is perfect in knowledge, will not, cannot utter words of falſhood. But who is that? and where to be found? Some underſtand it of God; *He that is perfect in knowledge is with thee*, that is, *God is with thee* in this buſineſs; and without all controverſie, it may be ſaid of God, in the higheſt and ſtricteſt ſenſe of Perfection, *He is perfect in knowledge. The Lord is a God of knowledge* (1 Sam. 2. 3.) *as well as a God of mercy; he is as knowing, as he is merciful, perfect in both.* Taking the Text

*חכם דומם
Imago ſcienti-
arum, vel in-
ter ſcientis.
Heb.*

'tis as if Elihu had said, *Thou hadst need, O Job, look to thy self, and diligently attend to what is spoken, for thou hast not to do with man, with one like thy self only, but thou hast to do with God.* Some insitt much, yea, altogether upon this Interpretation of the word; *God is with thee*, therefore receive truth; God cannot be deceiv'd, nor doth he deceive, therefore hearken and obey. Yet Elihu might speak thus with respect to the message brought by himself; for when man speaking in the Name of God speaks the mind of God to us, it may be said, God is with us, and speaks to us by him. The Apostle saith (2 Cor. 13. 5.) *If any require a Sign or Token of Christ speaking in me.* Christ speaks, while his Messengers and Ministers speak truth. The same Apostle testified of the *Thessalonians*, that they took his speaking as Gods speaking, (1 Thess. 2. 13.) *When ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of man, but (as it is in truth) the Word of God.* And therefore I conceive we are to understand the words of Elihu concerning Elihu himself, yet not as in himself, but as fitted for, and assisted in the work by God, *He that is perfect in knowledge is with thee*; As if he had said, *Though I am but a young man, yet thou hast not to deal with an ignorant man, with one who is but a novice or smatterer in the things of God, with one that is yet in the Elements of Divine knowledge and learning; He that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.* And it is conceiv'd that Elihu speaks thus in the third person for Modesties sake, as the Apostle Paul also did (2 Cor. 12. 2, 3.) *I knew a man in Christ, &c.* He doth not say, *I Paul was caught up to the third Heaven, and heard unspeakable words, &c.* but *I knew such a man.* Thus Elihu here; and doubtless, he had been lyable to censure, as arrogating too much to himself, had he spoken in the first person, *I that am perfect in knowledge am with thee*: Therefore he covers and conceals himself by expressing it in the third person, *He that is perfect in knowledge is with thee*; that is, *He that is with thee to convince thee of thy former errour, and to give thee better counsel, is perfect in knowledge.*

But is that true? was Elihu, or is any man perfect in knowledge, or (as the Hebrew hath it plurally) in knowledges, that is, in all kinds of knowledge, or in all the degrees of knowledge of any kind? Surely, No man is perfect in the knowledge of any one thing, much less of all things, (1 Cor. 13. 9, 12.) *We know in part,*

part, and prophesie in part, we see but darkly, &c. How then can it be said of *Elihu*, *He is perfect in knowledge*? I answer; There is a twofold perfection. First, Absolute. Secondly, Comparative. There's no man living here below hath absolute perfection of knowledge; yet one man being compar'd with another, may be said to be perfect in knowledge, another not: There are various degrees of knowledge in man; the highest degree of knowledge compar'd with the lowest, may be call'd perfect knowledg. Thus we are to understand *Elihu* speaking at the rate of a creature, not of God, or as becomes and is commensurable with the state of man in this life, whose best perfection in knowledge, is to know his own imperfections.

Secondly, *Elihu* speaks not of any perfection of knowledge, but of being perfect, that is, sincere, in knowledge. As if he had said, What I know, I know with an honest, upright heart and intention: I do not know to abuse thee or others, I make not use of my knowledge to deceive the simple, but to inform them. Some are crafty and cunning in knowledge, not perfect in it; they are knowing as the Devil is knowing, who takes his name *Demon* from his knowledge, yet he is not perfect, but corrupt in his knowledge, he is subtil, and full of devices to do mischief with his knowledge. That's perfect knowledge, which is sincerely employ'd for the Glory of God, and the good of those with whom we have to do. So then, the meaning of *Elihu* may be summ'd up thus in short; *He that is with thee* (that is my self) *will deal with thee to the best of my understanding, and in the Integrity of my heart*. This also suits well with the former part of the verse, *Truly my words shall not be false*.

Hence Note;

First, *Though no man knoweth all things, yet some know much more than others.*

One is a Babe, and needs milk; another is a grown Christian, and can, not only receive, but give the strong meat of instruction, (*Heb. 5. 13, 14.*) Some cannot understand wisdom, when spoken by the perfect, they know not how to learn, yet, some (as the Apostle speaks, *2 Tim. 3. 7.*) *are ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*. Others can speak wisdom among them that are perfect (*2 Cor. 2. 6.*) that is, they are got

to the highest Form of Gospel knowledge, and are fit to be Teachers.

Secondly, Note ;

Whether we know little or much, this is the perfection of our knowledge, honestly to imploy and improve it, for the information of the ignorant, and the conviction of those who are in error.

If we have but one Talent of knowledge, yet if we use it well, we are perfect in knowledge. They who have digged (as they think) to the heart, and dived to the bottom of all Sciences, yea into the heart of the Scriptures too; yet if they keep their knowledge to themselves, or know only for themselves, if they have base ends and by respects, in vending their knowledge, if they trade with their knowledge for self only, or to do mischief to others, their knowledge is not only utterly imperfect, but, as to any good account, nothing, or none at all. As he that slothfully hides his Talent, so he, who either vain-gloriously shews it, or deceitfully useth it, shall be numbred among those who have none, (*Math. 25. 29. Luke 8. 18.*)

Lastly, *Elihu* speaking of himself in a third person, Note,

Modesty is a great vertue, and the grace of all our Graces.

He that saith, I am perfect in knowledge, knoweth not what is nearest him, himself. We should use our knowledge as much as we can, but shew it as little as we can, unless in the using of it. 'Tis best for us to take little notice of our own goodness, and not to know our own knowledge. Usually they have but little, who are much in shewing (unless much called to it) what they have. Empty Vessels sound most, and shallow Brooks make the loudest noyse in passage. *Moses* put a Vail upon his face, as unwilling to have that Divine beauty seen. While we are provoked, and even necessitated to discover our knowledge, we should cover ourselves. It is our duty to impart our knowledge, but our folly to proclaim it.

Thus far *Elihu* hath been preparing his Patient *Job*, to receive his Medicinal instructions; he is now ready to administer them, for the cure and quieting of his distempered mind.

JOB,

JOB, Chap. 36. Vers. 5, 6.

5. Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any :
he is mighty in strength and wisdom.

6. He preserveth not the life of the wicked : but
giveth right to the poor.

Elihu having done prefacing, proceeds to the matter of his discourse, wherein he giveth a large description, of the power, wisdom, and justice of God, in his disposal and government of the world; First, In things Civil, which he prosecutes to the 26th verse of this Chapter. Secondly, In things Natural, which he handles to the 33d verse of the following Chapter. He begins in these two verses, with an excellent *Elogium*, or with the high praise of God in his divine perfections, into which he leads us with a command of attention, or serious consideration, yea of wonder and admiration.

Vers. 5. Behold, God is mighty.

I have several times opened the sense and intendment of this word *Behold*, and therefore will not stay upon it here; But what are we to behold? what is the sight which *Elihu* represents to our faith? it is God in his might; *Behold, God is mighty. God is strong, potent, omnipotent, God is mighty, yea Almighty*: The words are a plain assertion of that royal Attribute, the Mightiness or Almightyness, the Potency or Omnipotency of God. *Elihu* promised to ascribe righteousness unto God his Maker, yet here he begins with his *Mightiness*; and this we find often both ascribed to God, and asserted by him. When God made a Covenant with *Abraham*, he thus offers himself to his faith, though by another word in the Original, (*Gen. 17. 1.*) *I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect*, or upright, or sincere, (as our Margin reads it) The same title is again repeated by *Isaac*, when he dispatcht his son *Jacob* with a blessing to *Padan-Aram*, to avoyd the fury of his brother *Esau*, (*Gen. 28. 3.*) Thus also spake the blessed Virgin, (*Luke 1. 49.*) *He that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is his Name.* The holy Scrip-

אל כביר
Migim gran-
da, potens, id
est potentiissi-
mus.

tures

tures every where exalt the name of God by this glorious Attribute; *The mighty God, even the Lord hath spoken,* (Psal. 50. 1.) And he seems even to delight in this title, *The mighty God of Jacob.* Jacob was mighty with God in prayer, as a Prince he had power with God and prevailed; and God loved and loves to put forth his might for Jacob, his Church and people, in answer of their prayers. But I shall not stay in general upon this title, only opening it a little, shall make some inferences from it. *God is mighty* in a two-fold notion.

First, In authority, or in command; he commands in chief; God is Sovereigne and Supream; the Legislative power is in his hand, he gives Lawes, and he gives the Law to all the world, (Psal. 62. 11.) *Once hath he spoken, and I heard it twice, that power (Soveraignty, Law-giving power) belongs to God;* He is so mighty in this governing power, that he doth not only give Lawes to rule Nations, but he disposeth of all the Rulers in Nations, (Daniel Chap. 2. 21. Chap. 4. 17.) And again, (Psal. 22. 28.) *The Kingdome is the Lords, and he is the Governour among the Nations.*

Secondly, Besides this power of Authority, which the Lord exerciseth paramount over all the world, he hath also another power or might; he hath the might of Strength, as well as the might of Authority. Some have a great, a mighty Authority, but they have little or no might to make good that Authority; they cannot effect or carry on what they command, how much right soever they have to command, yea how just and right soever that is which they command: they have Authoritive might, yet want Executive might, they cannot bring about, nor issue what they determine. But when *Elihu* asserts, *Behold, God is mighty,* we are to take it under both notions, he is mighty, as he hath the whole Legislative power in his hand, and he is mighty, as having also the whole Executive power in his hand. The sons of men are jealous about these two Powers, and labour to keep them in distinct hands, that they who have the Legislative power, may not have the Executive power also, as fearing what they would do were they vested with both: But God (beyond all dispute) hath both powers in himself, and it is impossible they should be taken from him, or devolved upon any others, otherwise than himself pleaseth, or permitteth; behold and wonder, *God is mighty.*

(and

(and O how mighty is God!) in the union of these two powers; and to set forth yet further the wonder of his might, I shall give you seven brief propositions, or assertions, concerning the might of God, as it is twitted and made up of these two mightes or powers.

First, He is so mighty both in strength and power, that all the might which is in the creature, all the Legislative might, and all the Executive might, all the Authority, and all the ability which is in any man, is from him, and by him; that's it, which is said, (*Pro. 8. 15.*) *By me Kings reigne, and Princes decree Justice*; they have both their Authority, and their power to execute that Authority from me; every kind and degree of might (whatsoever it is) is but a derivation, a rivulet, from the Might and Power of God, that's the fountaine, the spring of all.

Secondly, Behold the mightiness of God, as in giving, so in taking away power, whether the power of authority or of strength, from the sons of men; He taketh away might from the mighty. Sometimes such power, such authority, such command is put into the hands of others, that they who put it there, know not how to get it out again, but are mastered and over-powered with the very power, which they trust others with; but such is the might of God, that whatever might of authority or strength he hath trusted or clothed any of the Princes or Powers of this world with, he can presently take it out of their hands again, (*Psal. 75. 7.*) *God is the Judge, he putteth down one, and setteth up another; and it is as easie with him to put down, as it is to set up; as he can make the weak strong, so he can presently make the strong weak; this is the glory of the might of God, he can take away power, as well as give it.*

Thirdly, Behold, God is mighty, for, he can do whatsoever pleaseth him; Certainly, he is Almighty that can do so; He whose power runs paralel with his will, he who can act as far as he desires, how mighty is he! none of the mighty ones of this world can do this. Oh, what work would some men make in the world, if they could do as much as they desire, if their power should alwayes extend, as far as, or be commensurate with their Will; yet thus it is with God. The Scriptures of truth are clear in it, (*Psal. 115. 3.*) where, when some prophane wretches had scoffed and jeered the people of God, with *where is your God?*

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they

they presently answer, *Our God is in heaven, and he hath done whatsoever pleaseth him.* It is not what this man pleaseth, or what that man pleaseth, or what this sort or gange of men please, but what the Lord pleaseth, that is done, (and that he doth well, how ill soever men do it) both in heaven and in earth. The Lord will not do all that he can, for he could by his power reduce this world to its first principles, a Chaos, or into a nothing, as it was before that, but he can do whatsoever he will; all things are possible to God, yea all things are easie, nothing hard or difficult to God: And we may very well put a *behold* of admiration upon his might (and such is the might of God,) who can do whatsoever he willet.

Fourthly, The Lord is so mighty, that *he can do all, without the help of any.* Some men are very mighty, but it is with other mens hands, with other mens strength; let them alone, let them stand by themselves, do but desert and leave them, and what can they do? just nothing. But such is the mightiness of God, the Almighty of God, that if all second causes, if all persons, powers and Nations should leave him, in that which he intends should be done, he can do it himself without them. The Prophet setting forth the victory of Christ over his enemies, represents him speaking thus, (*Isa. 63. 3.*) *I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me.* Which though many interpret of his passive conquest by suffering as a Priest, yet most, of his active conquest as a King, which he usually achieveth by himself alone, without any appearance of help from man. And though Deborah in her Song (*Judg. 5.*) pronounceth a curse upon those that came not out to help the Lord against the Mighty, yet it was not because the mighty God needed their help or service, but because they did owe it him, & in duty should have given it him. For, that the Lord wants no help, is further clear from the Prophet, (*Isa. 59. 16.*) *He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor,* (none so much as to speak a word) *therefore his arme wrought salvation, and his righteousness it sustained him.* Not only, no arme was put forth to help, but no tongue so much as move or intercede for help to do it, yet his own arme did it. Thus the Prophet, (*Isa. 44. 24.*) *He stretcheth forth the Heavens alone, and laid the Foundations of the Earth by himself.* Now as it was with the Lord in the work of Creation, he had

had no helper, no aſſiſtant, he did it alone by himſelf; to it is as true, as to all works of providence. Let all men forſake him (as the Apoſtle *Paul* complained they did him, *2 Tim.* 4. 16.) and no man ſtand by him, yet the Lord (what his purpoſe and counſel is) can bring to paſs alone: *O behold this might! he can do all things without the help of any;* and not only ſo, but

Fifthly, God is ſo mighty, that he can bring all things to paſs, or do what he pleaſeth, though all creatures ſhould be diſpleaſed, though all men and Angels, though all ſecond cauſes ſtand up to hinder and to ſtop him. The Lord can work his will againſt every will, againſt all contradictions and oppoſitions. Thus the Prophet extols the power of God, (*Iſa.* 14. 27.) *The Lord of Hoſts hath purpoſed, and who ſhall diſannul it? His hand is ſtretched out, and who ſhall turn it back?* Where we have, firſt, the purpoſe of God, none can diſannul that; Secondly, the execution of that purpoſe, *He ſtretcheth out his hand* (to do ſuch or ſuch a thing) *who ſhall turn it back?* Let all men and Devils joyn forces and counſels, let them ſtrive to do it, they ſhall not be able to do it. We have a like confeſſion, (*Dan.* 4. 35.) *He doth according to his will in the Armies of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, and none can ſtay his hand, or ſay to him, what doſt thou?* Such is the mightineſs of God, that he can work, not only when the creature doth not help him, or when they apoſtatize from and deſert him or his intereſt, but though they ſet their hearts and heads, their hands, and their all againſt him, they cannot ſtay him, nor hinder his work; *I ſaith the Lord, Iſa.* 43. 13. *will work, and who ſhall let it?*

Sixthly, Behold, how mighty the Lord is, he is ſo mighty, that he can do all theſe things, and never trouble himſelf in doing of them; he can do all things, and not be weary. We ſee the mightieſt among men, the Powers of this world, how they are toyled, and moyled, how they are worn out, how they ſweat and labour, and are ready to faint and tire, in bringing ſome poor buſineſs, ſome petty project about, or to its iſſue. But the greateſt deſignes which the Lord hath in his heart to do, he can do them, without any wearifomneſs or trouble at all, (*Iſa.* 40. 28.) *Doſt not thou know that the Lord is not weary, neither doth he faint:* and when the Prophet ſaith, *the Lord is not weary, neither doth he faint,* the meaning is not this, the Lord is ſomewhat weary, only

he doth not faint, but the meaning is this, he hath not the least wearisomness upon him, no more than a man hath in turning his hand; not only are all things possible to God, or such as he can do, if he put forth the utmost of his power and strength, if he make (as we say) much ado, if he lay himself out to the full; not only are things thus possible to God, (which yet argueth wonderfull might) but behold, the Lord is so mighty, that there is nothing difficult unto him. Not only can he possibly do great things, but he can easily do them, he can do them without the least trouble to himself: There is nothing hard to him, who can do every thing. Mighty men have done great things, but they will tell you they could hardly do them, they were forced to turn every stone, to straine every veine of their hearts to do them; whereas the mighty God can do his work with as much ease, as desire to have it done.

Seaventhly, Behold, God is mighty, so mighty that he can do any thing, but that which will argue that he is not almighty. The Scripture speaks of something which the Lord cannot doe, (Tit. 1. 2.) In hope of eternal life, which God who cannot lye hath promised. And again, the Apostle saith of God, not only making promise but oath to Abraham, (Heb. 6. 18.) That by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lye, the heirs of promise might have strong consolation. Once more, (2 Tim. 2. 13.) If we believe not, yet he abideth faithfull, he cannot deny himself. We have these and such like negative Propositions concerning God, telling us what he cannot do. Now the only reason why it is said, the Mighty God cannot do these things, is because the doing of them would argue him not to be Almighty. To lye is to be weak; to deny himself would affirme his impotency, therefore he cannot do these things; the Lord is so mighty, so strong, that it is impossible for him to do any thing, which should declare any weakness or impotency in him. Thus I have given you seaven assertions concerning the might of God, all which may very well call for a behold of admiration and astonishment at the mightiness of God. Take a few Inferences from this grand Assertion.

First, For Comfort.

Secondly, For Terror. Behold, the Lord is Mighty, Almighty; this speaks comfort to the people of God.

First, Surely then he can do whatsoever he hath promised to do,

do, and if so, then look through the promises and see, whether God hath not promised, to do good things for his people in generall, and for every believer in particular; Behold, the Lord is mighty, these are not vaine words, he can fill up, and fulfill all his promises. As he hath made promises, so he can create performances. *Abraham* was fully perswaded that what he had promised he was able to performe, (*Rom. 4. 21.*)

Secondly, If the Lord be mighty in all those notions fore-shewed, then certainly he can do whatsoever we desire him to do according to his will. As God hath not out-promised his power, so we cannot out-pray the power, nor out-ask the arme of God; we may quickly out-pray the power of man, and ask what he cannot do; he may say, I cannot do this for you, it is not in my power: but here is our comfort, if what we pray and ask be good for us to have, if it be just and righteous for him to do, let it be what it will, it is within the compasse of the power of God, who is also ready to performe it for us. The Apostle assureth us of this, (*Eph. 4. 20.*) *He is able to do for us abundantly, above what we ask or think*; he cannot only do what we ask, but he can do above what we ask, yea, abundantly above what we ask. *How narrow, and short, and poor, are our words and prayers, compared with the power of God!* He can do abundantly for us above what we ask, and not only so, but above what we think. If a man should have somewhat in his mind, that he is not able to express, (as the mind is far larger than the tongue,) if a man think what he cannot speak or utter, yet the Lord is of such power, that he can do not only what we think, but abundantly above what we are able to think. How many requests do we put up daily to God in prayer for our persons, for our families, for the Church of God, and about the Kingdoms of men, our own Kingdome especially, is it not matter of singular comfort, that all these requests are before a Mighty God, a God who can quickly send down all our prayers in performances, and give us the fruit of all our askings? 'Tis an everlasting Spring of comfort and encouragement unto the people of God, both in prayer and unto prayer; they pray to him who is *mighty*, mighty to do what they pray for.

Thirdly, If God be so mighty himself that he can do all things, then he is able to give us might to do what he requireth of us; if he be mighty enough to do what we ask, then he is *Mighty enough*.

enough to enable us to do what he commands. We ask many things of God, God commands many things at our hands; when we ask, God is mighty to help us to what we ask; and if what we ask be what he commands us, he will surely help us to do what we ask, even whatsoever he commands us to do; he strengthens his people with might by his Spirit in the inner man, (*Eph. 3. 16.*) Paul could say, (*Phil. 4. 18.*) *I can do all things, through Christ strengthening me*; Christ hath strength to do all things, and Christ can make me strong (saith the Apostle) to do all things; Christ hath strength to do all things that he hath a mind to do, and he is strong to strengthen us in and for the doing of all things, that are according to his mind.

Fourthly, If God be thus mighty to do all things, if he hath all strength, both commanding and executing strength, then as he can give us strength to do all things that he calls us to do, so he hath strength enough to reward us for all we do for him; this is comfortable. Sometimes we work and labour for men, who are not able, they have little power, or if power enough, yet no will at all to reward us for it. But as the Lord is not unrighteous, to forget our labour, (*Heb. 6. 10.*) so he is not unable, that is, he is infinitely able to reward us. We find the strength of God spoken of to this poynt, (*Jer. 32. 18, 19.*) *Thou shewest loving kindness unto thousands, &c. The great, the mighty God, the Lord of Hosts is his Name; Great in counsel, and mighty in working, for thine eyes are open upon all the wayes of the sons of men, to give every one according to his wayes, and according to the fruit of his doings.* When the Prophet had asserted, *God is mighty in working*, he brings it down to this, he is mighty in rewarding us for all our works. Do not think (what labour soever you have taken for the Lord) that you shall want a reward, for the Lord hath treasure and store, strength and power enough, to give you a sufficient recompence for all your labours.

Fifthly, This truth is matter of comfort and encouragement in doing good, not only as 'tis a service to God, but as it is a kindness to men, especially to the poor, and more especially to Gods poor. The mightiness of God should move us to be charitable, yea, liberall and bountifull in our charity. The Apostle useth this Argument, (*2 Cor. 9. 8.*) for having said, *God loveth a chearfull giver*, he presently adds, *God is able to make all grace abound*
towards

towards you, that ye alwayes having allsufficiency in all things, may abound in every good work. As if he had said, Be not afraid to give, nor sparing in giving, for God (to whom you lend, when you give to the poor) is a good debtor, a sufficient paymaster, and he will pay you, not only in your own, but in better coyne, than you lent : he will pay you in spiritualls for your temporalls, in grace for your gold, and that abundantly, both in the grace of his favour shining upon you, as also in the Graces of his Spirit working in you ; yea, ye shall have, not only an All-sufficiency in spiritual things, but in all things, which must needs include temporal things ; even your Gold and Silver will multiply as Seed, by sowing and scattering it abroad (as he alludes in the 9th verse) so that ye shall (through this ability of God) be enabled to abound in every good work, that is, every good work of Grace, in general ; and if you are called to that special good work of Charity again and again, you shall be able to abound in every one of them. Some are doubtful, if they should give freely and liberally, they should lose by it, and be straitned themselves : No, saith the Apostle, I avouch and engage the Almightyness of God for it, if you be cheerful givers, God will shew his All-sufficiency in giving you an All-sufficiency in all things. Here are three or four *Alls*, promised to those, who give but *somewhat* in a due manner. Here is, First, *all grace* ; Secondly, *All-sufficiency* ; Thirdly, *in all things* ; and Fourthly, *alwayes* ; and all these grounded upon the mightiness of God : *God is able.*

Sixthly, *God is mighty* : Then he can protect us from, support us under, or deliver us out of all those dangers, which we incurre for his Names sake, (*Dan. 3. 17.*)

Secondly, Hence we may inferre matter of terrour to the wicked world, the sons of *Belial*, the mightiest enemies of God. What is the might of sinful man, to the mightiness of God ! *The weakness of God is stronger than man* ; what then is his mightiness ! We read (*Rev. 6. 15.*) how, the (Heathen) *Kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief Captains, and* (which may be the recapitulation of all these) *the mighty men, hid themselves in Dens, and said to the Mountains fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.* The Apostle checks the madness of the *Corinthians* in sinning, by an insinuation of the mightiness of God, against

against whom they sinned (1 Cor. 10. 22.) *Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy ? Are we stronger than he ?* As if he had said, What do ye mean ? (he speaks to those that would venture to go to the Table of Devils, that is, who cared not how they mingled themselves, and held Communion, in the things of God, with those who worshipped Devil-gods, or (as all Idolaters do) Devils rather than God ; what mean you (saith he to these) consider your selves, *Will you provoke the Lord ? are you stronger than he ? are you his match ? are you able to grapple with him ?* not so well as a Child with a mighty Giant, or a Lamb with a Lion. *The mightiness of the Lord, his Almightyness, should make sinners tremble, and fear to provoke him ; he can crush them as a Moth, and break them in pieces like a Potters Vessel.* As 'tis the Joy of all true Believers, that God *hath laid help for them* (as 'tis said, Psal. 89. 19.) *upon one that is mighty*, that is, Christ, of whom David was but a shadow ; and as 'tis the comfort of the Fatherless, (how weak soever) that *their Redeemer is mighty* (Prov. 23. 11.) So it may fill the faces of the wicked and presumptuous with confusion, and their hearts with despairing sorrow, to hear, that God, who is ready to take vengeance on them, is mighty ; *Behold, God is mighty ;* that's a glorious fight ; and yet behold a fight more glorious, if more glorious may be,

And despiseth not any.

What a temperament is here ? God is so mighty that he feareth none, no, not the mightiest, yet so meek, that *he despiseth not any*, no, not the meanest. *Elihu having asserted the mightiness of God, amplifieth it, First, by his gracious condescension and moderation in the use of his mightiness ; he is mighty, yet he doth not exercise his might in a proud vaunting or contemning way, he despiseth not any ; that's the first thing, in which he amplifies the excellency of God in his mightiness.* Secondly, As God is thus mighty, and moderate in the exercise of his might, not *despising any* ; so behold another excellency of this might of God, He is mighty, not only in strength of Arm and Authority, but (as the last words of the verse set him forth)

In strength and wisdom ;

Of, he is as wise as he is strong. Some men have a great deal of

of might; and they presently swell proudly, this spoils all; others have a great deal of might, but not a bit of wit, or wisdom, or understanding, how to dispose or make the best of it: But what a mighty God have we to do with! who is mighty, and despiseth no man; **who hath, not only might of strength, but might of wisdom too.** Thus we see how *Elihu*, in this latter part of the verse, advanceth or extollet the mightiness of God, in these two things, the infinite Moderation and Wisdom, that go along with it and act it. I shall a little open both. First, his wonderful Moderation in the exercise of his mightiness; *He is mighty,*

And despiseth not any.

To despise is an act of Pride; Pride is a bad Mother of many bad Children, these three especially. First, **boasting of our selves.** Secondly, **contending with others.** Thirdly, **despising of others.**

The word here used signifies to despise with abhorrence or loathing, as the Stomack doth meat which is offensive to it; all favoured meat is loathsome, and any thing which the mind nauseates, is an abhorrence to us. The Lord *despiseth not*, he doth not nauseate any. The word *any* is not exprest in the Original Text, that saith only, *The Lord is Mighty, and despiseth not*; we put that supplement in our Translation, *any*; *He is Mighty, and despiseth not any.* Others render more strictly, thus, *Behold, God is Mighty, and despiseth not his own people.* The Chaldee Paraphrase speaks exegetically, *The Lord is mighty, and despiseth not the righteous man.* The Greek Version hath a fourth supplement, to the same purpose, *God is mighty, and despiseth not the innocent person, the man free from evill or wickedness: a man of integrity, a man of simplicity, the Lord will not despise: such are often afflicted, but*

never despised, especially not as such. Lastly, thus, *God is mighty, and despiseth not the mean, the afflicted, the poor, or those of low estate, (Psal. 22. 24.) He hath not despised, nor abhorred, the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him, but when he cryed unto him, he heard.* And this seems most proper to the scope and meanning of *Elihu* here; God is mighty, and despiseth not those who have no might. Thus the words reflect chiefly upon *Job*, who at least seemed to charge God, that he did not consider him in his affliction, or in his low estate when he complained and cryed to him. We have two Texts in this Book of *Job*, which

Z might

ולא ימאס

Inno-
centem simpli-
tem integrum.
Sept.
Epsi, affliguntur
justi, tamen non
ideo quis justis
Merc.

might very well move *Elihu* to speak thus unto him; though God be mighty, yet he despiseth not the afflicted, or the poor. *Job* said (Chap. 10. 3.) Is it good to thee that thou shouldst oppress, that thou shouldst despise the work of thy hands, and shine upon the Counsel of the wicked? As if he had said to God, Thou seemest to despise me, the work of thy hand, now that I am poor, low, and reduced, as it were, to dust. Again (Chap. 19. 7.) we have neer the same Language, Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard, I cry aloud, but there is no Judgment. As much as to say, I am despised and neglected, I am not regarded when I cry. This *Elihu* takes off in the present Text, Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any; he despiseth not the afflicted, nor the poor, when they cry unto, and call upon him; and therefore in this, O *Job*, thou hast misbehaved thy self, or spoken amiss.

But which-soever of these supplements we take, the sense is good, and the Proposition true, he despiseth not; what will he not despise? we say, not any; a second, his own; a third, the Just; a fourth, the Innocent; a fifth, the afflicted (there is a sixth, which I shall offer before I part with these words) All these are true, God despiseth not.

Hence Note;

First, Though the Lord be infinitely more mighty than the mightiest of men, yet he doth not despise any man;

He doth not despise man in general, who is the work of his hand; yea, *Job* said once (Chap. 14. 15.) Thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hand. The Lord doth not despise any of his works, as they are his works, or as they come out of his hand; and therefore when *Jonah* seemed to set so low a rate upon the *Ninivites*, who were the work of his hand, his Creatures, the Lord reprov'd him for it, by the *Gourd*, which when the Lord smote, *Jonah* was angry; but said the Lord, Dost thou well to be angry for thy *Gourd*? Hast thou mercy upon a *Gourd*, and should not I spare this City, wherein are more than six score thousand persons, that know not their right hand from their left, and also much Cattle? The Lord did not despise, but pity them. Go through all the sorts of men, the Lord despiseth none; the Lord despiseth not great men, because great (which will come to a further consideration, upon another Translation of the Text) nor mean.

mean men, because mean; he despiseth not men in prosperity, because they are rich and prosperous, nor doth he despise men in adversity, because poor and unprosperous. He despiseth not any upon any of these accounts; the Lord despiseth none but the wicked, and the ungodly, the unbeliever and the impenitent, and all them he despiseth, and them he ever will despise, how great, how high, how mighty, how rich soever they are; the Lord despiseth them, and he will alwayes despise them. He doth not despise any man because a great man, if he be not a wicked great man; and let men be never so poor or low, the Lord looks not disdainfully upon them because they are so; God doth not despise any man because he is in a bad case, he only despiseth men, because their case or Cause is bad, and then he will despise them, let them be who or what they will. Such is the goodness of God, and this goodness is his Glory, That although the highest and greatest of men, are but as worms to him, or not so much to him as the dust of the Ballance, or the drop of the Bucket, yet he despiseth not any, no, not the lowest and least of men.

Secondly, When the Text saith, *he despiseth not*, there is more in it than is exprest. We may take it affirmatively, God gives all sorts of men due regard and favour, he takes care of them, and bestows suitable mercies upon them, even upon the meanest and poorest of them: if they be his, if they be faithful and godly, how doth the Lord own them! how doth the Lord honour them! how doth the Lord embrace and lay them in his bosome, though they lye upon the Dunghil, as Job did! As when we are warned not to despise the chastnings of the Lord (Heb. 12. 5.) we are taught to take them in good part; and as when the Apostle admonisheth us (1 Thess. 5. 20.) not to despise Prophecie, his meaning is not only this, that he would not have us slight it, and throw it at our heels, but he would have us give it due esteem, and honour it as one of our choycest mercies, he would have us set a great price upon it, and bless God heartily for it. So here, when *Elihu saith The Lord despiseth not any*, his purpose is to shew, that he respects and favours men according to their condition, but most his own faithful and obedient Servants. This Interpretation may give us another Instruction:

God hath a due regard and respect to all sorts and conditions of men.

*Di-tur Deus
ignis consu-
munt, quantum
universa sibi
dissimilia de-
vorat ac consu-
mat: sed sibi
similia comple-
ctitur.* Brent.

Having made all men, he doth not throw them up to the wide world, much less trample upon them himself; but owns them, preserveth them, watcheth over them all. And as for his special people, he tends them as a Nurse her infant, or as a Father tends his children; he counsels them, he guides them, he directs and leads them, he supports and comforts them, he carries them through this world, as it were in his own armes, as the Eagle carries her young ones upon her wings. The Lord is a consuming fire to burn up the wicked, those that are unlike him, and like him not; but he is a warm Sun, to cherish, and a safe-guarding Shield, to protect those that fear him and trust in his Name: He indeed will be as a refining Fire, to fetch out and consume the dross that he sees in his people, and as a trying Fire (by affliction) to their Graces (as *Jobs* case was). But when he is so, and doth so, he is so far from despising them, that he honours them, and makes them more honourable. And therefore having made Promise of being with his people when they should be called to walk through the fire (*Isa.* 43. 2.) he presently subjoyns, (*vers.* 4.) *Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable.* As if he had said, Since thou hast given a proof that thou art good Metal, and that thou hast lost and left nothing in the fire of affliction, but thy dross, I both honour thee my self, and will cause others to honour thee also.

Again, *He despiseth not any.* *Elihu* in this sets out the honour of God, he puts this as a Crown of Glory upon the head of his Power. *God is mighty, yet he despiseth not any.*

Hence Note;

To be mighty in Power, and meek in Spirit, shews an excellent God-like Spirit.

As God is great, so good; both are equally essential to him: goodness, gentleness, and meekness, meet together and are marked with greatness and mightiness in God, (*Nahum* 1. 8.) *The Lord is great in Power, and slow to anger; he is not presently in a flame with sinners, but waiteth to be gracious.* *Fury is not in me,* (saith the Lord, *Isa.* 27. 4, 5.) I do not presently execute my power, because great in power. *Who would set the Briers and Thorns against me in battel? I would go thorow them, and burn them together; or let him take hold of my strength, and make peace with*

with me, and he shall make peace with me. As if he had said, If sinners, of one sort or other, who are to me, or to my people, like Bryars and Thorns, vexing and troubling both me and them, should take the boldness to contend with me, I could quickly rid my hands of them, even as soon as fire can consume Bryars and Thorns fully dry; yet I rather advise them to humble themselves, and humbly make suit for peace, and they shall not find me inexorable, though I am invincible; they may have Peace for the asking, though I fear not at all the issue of the War. O that the mighty men of the World, would strive to imitate this overture of the mighty God: But oh how unlike are the most of the mighty men of this World to God!

First, Some mighty men of this World rather pride themselves that they can do hurt, than please themselves, that they may do good with their might. (*Psalm 52. 1.*) *Why boastest thou O mighty man, that thou canst do mischief?* that thou canst tread and trample upon others? this thy boast should be thy shame. Mighty men are apt to despise all men (upon the matter) that are below them; that are their underlings; but why dost thou boast, O thou mighty man, seeing (as it followeth in the *Psalm*) *the goddnesse of God (who is mightier than thou) endureth continually.*

Secondly, How unlike are they to God, who having might and power in their hand, despise the mean, and the oppressed, who come to them for Justice! Such are not like God, the Judge of all men, but like that Judge, whose Character was (*Luke 18. 2.*) *He feared not God, nor regarded man;* he despised all; what cared he for them, or their tears, so he might serve his own turn, and carry on his own ends? Woe to the mighty, who despise the Cause, much more who despise the cries of the oppressed.

Thirdly, The mighty men of the earth usually despise those whom God honoureth most. God despiseth not any, but he highly esteemeth his own; whereas the mighty men of the World are apt to despise all, especially his, that is, the Generation of the righteous; they that are nearest to Gods hearr, are farthest from theirs. The affections and estimations of the mighty, seldom fall in with, but run cross to Gods, (*Psalm 10. 3.*) *He blesteth the Covetous, whom God abhors;* that is, he hath a high esteem of those, whom God cannot abide; and he that doth so, will never abide

abide those whom God highly esteems, and those least whom God esteems most highly; away (saith he) with those that are so strict in their way, away with them (saith he) that walk in the narrow way. O let such mighty ones as despise these, consider how unlike they are to the mighty God, who despiseth not any, who greatly honoureth these. *Michal, Davids Wife, Sauls Daughter*, had a piece of this spirit in her; though *David* was a mighty King, she despised him, only because he was a holy and a zealous King: When she saw how he danced before the Ark, when she saw how he was taken with the things of God, she despised him in her heart, and for that was punished with a barren womb, as long as she lived, (2 *Sams.* 6. 23.) They who act highest in holiness, are always lowest in the thoughts of the unholy.

Fourthly, They that are mighty in Parts and Gifts of speech and knowledge, they who are got a Form higher than their Brethren, how apt are they to despise all that are below them! Nor is this the sin of carnal vain men only, but of many (for the main) good men also, who taking too much notice of their own great Abilities, will scarce take any notice of them who have but little. This dead Fly hath corrupted many a Box of precious Ointment; this Weed hath been found growing in the richest grounds; and the richer any ground is, the more apt it is to bring forth this Weed, unless the Lord, with those other Gifts, give also that which is more excellent than all Gifts, even than the Tongue, yea Head of men and Angels, an humble and self-denying heart. *St Paul* himself was in danger to be lifted up (and certainly had, if God had not given him preventing Physick) with this distemper, through the abundance of *Revelations*; now, he that is lifted up in himself, is within a step of despising others. And O how unlike are these in this also to God, who is mighty, not only in strength, but in wisdom, yet despiseth not any! And, that God who is mighty and despiseth not any, is mighty, not only in strength, but in wisdom, is *Elihu's* Assertion also concerning God, in the close of this verse, and comes next to be opened and handled.

He is mighty in strength and wisdom.

The Original may be thus rendred strictly; *He is mighty, the strength of heart: Now, the strength of the heart consists, first, in courage;*

courage ; *secondly, in wisdom* ; and hence we translate distinctly, *He is mighty in strength and wisdom*. Here are two poynts of Gods might according to our reading : He is mighty, First, in strength ; Secondly, in wisdom. As before we had that Noble combination of Mightiness & Meekness in God, He is mighty and despiseth not any ; so here we have another noble combination, in his mightiness, of strength and wisdom ; *He is mighty in strength and in wisdom*. *Some men are mighty in strength, who are weak in wisdom ; others are mighty in wisdom, but not in strength ; both meet and are joyned in God (in whom all things are but one, he being but an infinite simplicity, though they are acted diversly towards man, both these (I say) meet in God) and he equally excels in both.*

Yet because, if these two be taken distinctly, we can understand nothing in God by strength, but what was comprehended in mightiness before spoken of, therefore I conceive, these words, *He is mighty in strength and wisdom*, signifie no more in this place than this, That God is mighty in the strength of wisdom, or that he is mighty strong in wisdom. And so I shall proceed with the Text.

This strength of the wisdom of God, or his strong wisdom, is of two sorts, or consists in a two-fold wisdom. First, there is his knowing and discerning wisdom. Secondly, there is his governing and disposing wisdom.

First, There is a strength of wisdom in knowing and discerning : God is mighty strong in this wisdom, in this knowing, this discerning wisdom, (*1 Sam. 2. 3.*) *The Lord is a God of knowledge, by him actions are weighed* ; He knoweth our actions exactly, and he will weigh them to a grain, he knoweth our actions to the utmost. And as he knoweth our actions, so our intentions ; he knoweth our inside as well as our outside, (*Heb. 4. 13.*) *All things are naked and manifest before him, with whom we have to do* ; and they are not only naked to the skin, but unbowelled, and anatomized to every veine and bone, (*Acts 15. 18.*) *Known to God are all his works from the beginning of the world* ; he knoweth all his own works, much more ours. Thus God is strong in wisdom, as wisdom consists in knowledge ; and thus strong he is, he knoweth all things ; First, the least things, as well as the greatest ; 'tis no burden, no distraction to God, to take notice of the

the smallest matters, even to the numbering of the haies of our head. That's true greatness of knowledge, to know the least things and motions of the meanest creature. Secondly, he knoweth the most secret things; *Secret things belong to God,* (*Dent. 29. 29.*) that is, God hath secrets which he reserves to himself, man cannot know them, man must not attempt to know them, such an attempt were insufferable intrusion. Now as God hath secrets of his own, which no man must meddle with, so he medles with all our secrets, our secrets belong to God as well as his own; he knows the secrets of our hearts, he hath a key to that Cabinet, and can unlock it, and look into it; we may lock men, one and other, out of our hearts, but we cannot lock out God, he seeth what's there, such is the strength of his knowing wisdom. Thirdly, He knows things future, or what shall be; he knoweth what as yet is not, as clearly as what is; *He declareth the end from the beginning,* (*Isa. 46. 10.*) Upon this ground the Prophet challengeth all the Idols of the world, (*Isa. 41. 23.*) *Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are Gods;* tell us what shall be next, tell us what will be to morrow; that will be a demonstration of your Divinity; the Lord declareth things to come, and he only declares them. We know little of that which is, he, and he only, knoweth that which will be. All futures unrevealed, are secrets, and among them our thoughts are the greatest secrets, yet them the Lord knoweth, (*Psal. 139. 2.*) *Thou (saith David) understandest my thoughts afar off,* that is, before I think them; Is not this strength of knowing wisdom? Fourthly, God knoweth all things alwayes, or everlastingly, there is not one of them slips out of his knowledge, they are at all times alike, that is, perfectly before him; Is not this also strength of knowing wisdom? Fifthly, The Lord knoweth all these things as distinctly as if he had but one thing to know. Sixthly, He knoweth all things by one act of single and simple intuition, he doth not know (as we) by report from others, nor by comparing one thing with another, nor by inferring one thing from another, that is, he doth not know by discourse, argument, or demonstration, but all things are before the eye of his knowledge nakedly and immediately, as they are. These two last as well as any of, or all the former, are a clear proof, not only, that God is knowing and wise, but that he is mighty in strength of knowing wisdom.

Secondly,

Secondly, Consider wisdom, as it is applyed in working. Some have much of that wisdom which we call Theoreticall, knowing, discerning wisdom; but as for practicall, working wisdom, how to put things together, how to order them as to the busineses and affairs of this life, they are very far to seek. We say, *Great Scholars are not alwayes the wisest men*: many are knowing, they know almost all things, they will dispute (*de omni scibili*) of all things knowable, yet are very weak when they come to lay things together for practice or government; if it be but the government of a family, or of their private estate, they know not how to manage it, much less can they manage the government of great Societies or Corporations, least of all of Kingdomes and Nations. But as for the Lord, he hath not only a knowing wisdom, but a disposing, a governing, a working, practical wisdom, in ordering all affairs, which we properly call prudence or discretion, (*Psal. 112. 5.*) We have seen knowing learned men do things very foolishly, imprudently, indiscreetly. But all the works of the Lord are contrived and model'd, as also effected and perfected with infinite wisdom. Hence that Holy exclamation, (*Psal. 104. 24.*) *O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all?* Which as it is true of all the works of Creation, so likewise of the works of Providence, the former of which are spoken of in the beginning of the Psalm, and the latter in the following parts of it. The Lord in wisdom made the world, *He made the heavens by his wisdom*, (*Psal. 136. 5.*) *and by wisdom hath he founded the earth*, (*Pro. 3. 19*) If in both those places we understand Christ by wisdom, it doth not hinder, but advance this truth; now as the Lord made the world both heaven and earth in wisdom, so in and by the same wisdom he governs heaven and earth, and all his works in both are full of wisdom. Thus it appears that the Lord is mighty in strength of wisdom, both as to the knowing and ordering of all things: yea, the Lord is so mighty in both these kinds of wisdom, that there is indeed none wise but he. And therefore the Scripture not only calls him, *The wise God*, but *God only wise*, (*Rom. 16. 27. Jude v. 25.*) And surely he is mighty strong in wisdom, who hath all the wisdom, or is only wise. Some may say, How are we to understand that? is not wisdom one of those communicable Attributes of God? so we distinguish the divine Attributes, some are commu-

niscable, others are incommunicable. The infiniteness, the omniscience, the unchangeableness, the simplicity of God are incommunicable, but the holiness, the justice, the mercy and wisdom of God, are communicable; that is, God doth communicate unto man his holiness, his justice and wisdom. Why then is it said, *That God is only wise*, seeing God hath endowed many with a spirit of wisdom, or hath made many wise men in the world?

I answer, First, God is said to be only wise, because there is none so wise as he; his wisdom is so much beyond the wisdom of all men, that no man may be called wise but God. Thus also God is called *the only Potentate*, (1 Tim. 6. 15.) because though there are many Potentates in the world, yet Gods potency is beyond them all. His life also is such, that, at the 16th verse of the same Chapter it is said, *He only hath immortality*, yet both the Angels and the souls of men are immortal; but God hath immortality in a way of such eminency, that the very Angels and souls of men are mortal in comparison of him. David said of his life, (Psal. 39. 5.) *My age is nothing to thee*; I scarce live at all, when I consider the life of God; so the wisest man in the world may say of his wisdom, my wisdom is nothing unto thee, I have no wisdom when I consider how wise God is.

Secondly, God is said to be only wise, because there are none originally wise but he; his wisdom is of himself, yea his wisdom is himself; the wisdom of God is not a separable quality from him, as the wisdom of a man is. Many are men, but not wise men; but it is impossible for God to be God, and not to be wise; his wisdom is essential to him. The wisdom of man is like gilding upon an earthen vessel; but the wisdom of God is like a golden vessel. The wisest men are gilded over with wisdom, they are adorned and beautified with it, but no man, how wise soever is wisdom, only God is. God is (if I may so speak) an immense and immeasurable vessel of gold, he is all gold, you cannot distinguish the gold from the vessel, 'tis gold quite through, he is massie gold, massie wisdom. The wisdom of man is another thing from himself. The wisdom of God is himself; and thus God alone is wise.

Thirdly, *God is only wise*, because all wisdom is from him; as he hath his wisdom from himself, so all others have wisdom from him; all the wisdom of men and Angels, is but a ray from his

his light, but a stream, yea, but a drop from his Ocean. *Bezaliel's* Artificial wisdom was from the Lord, *Solomon's* political wisdom was from the Lord; *Solomon* asked wisdom from the Lord to govern. And not only is the wisdom of Princes, Statesmen and Politicians, but the very Plowmans wisdom is from the Lord. (*Isa.* 28. 26.) where the Prophet having shewed how the Plowman tills the ground, how he harrows and casts in the seed, how he thresheth and gets out the graine, he addeth (v. 29.) *This comes from the Lord, who is wonderfull in counsel, and excellent in working.* The Plowman knoweth not how to till his ground, to sow his seed, to harrow his land, to thresh his corne, if the Lord did not give him wisdom for it. Thus common wisdom as well as political and spiritual wisdom is of God, as *Daniel* confessed when the secret was revealed to him, (*Dan.* 2. 21.) *He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding.* Seeing then all wisdom is from God, we must confesse, *He is only wise.*

Fourthly, The Lord may be said to be only wise, because he is victoriously wise, his wisdom is a conquering wisdom, he conquers by his wisdom as well as by his power; his wisdom overthrows the wise men of the world, (*Prov.* 21. 30.) *There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord.* Many men will be taking and giving counsel against the Lord, but it shall not stand (*Isa.* 8. 9.) He is only wise, who destroyeth the wisdom of the wise, (*1 Cor.* 1. 19. *1 Cor.* 3. 19, 20.) Thus the Lord is *mighty in strength of wisdom*, in knowing and disposing wisdom, discerning all things most clearly, and ordering all things most wisely, according to the pleasure of his holy and righteous will: and he is so wise in all these things, that he ought to be acknowledged and revered, as *the only wise God, or as God only wise.* Hence take these Inferences.

First, If the Lord be mighty in strength of wisdom as well as in strength of power, *then fear to do any thing amiss* before him; he will spy out every fault; and the more you cover the faults, cracks and flaws in what you do, the more the Lord sets himself to find them out; you cannot hide what you do from him, therefore take heed what you do.

Secondly, Is God mighty in strength of wisdom? *then do not find fault with any thing he doth, for he can do nothing amiss.*

The works of providence, whether they regard persons or Nations, are done with as much exactness as the works of Creation were. In what beauty and order was the fabrick of this world set up at first in six dayes! It is called *Cosmos* in Greek, from the beautiful order visible quite through it; and certainly, the works of providence are as orderly and perfect as the work of Creation, and so will appear at last, though now we see so many appearing confusions, disturbances, and tossings up and down: The Lord keeps order, how disorderly soever men are. The Lord doth all things in number, weight and measure. There is not one, the least, slip, error or mistake in what himself doth, nor in what he suffers men to do as to his own ends, how many errors and mistakes soever there are in the wayes of men, or in the means which they use. Then take heed of picking holes in Gods work, much more of picking quarrels with his work. We are apt to find fault (where there is none) with what God doth, but how slow are we to find faults (where there are many) in our own doings!

Thirdly, Is the Lord mighty in strength of wisdom? then never be troubled, though you have mighty wise men against you; be not afraid, only labour to assure the mighty wise God for you. If you can but assure God, who is mighty in wisdom for you, you need not be troubled, though mighty wise men are against you, though *Achitophels*, though *Mathevels*, though the Conclave of *Babylon* be against you: if the wisdom of God be with us and for us, we are well enough, and shall do well enough, notwithstanding the wisdom of the world against us.

Fourthly, If God be mighty in strength of wisdom, then, when we want wisdom, and know not what to do, or how to suffer, let us go to God; if we want wisdom to manage a prosperous estate, or to bear an afflicted estate, let us go to God. The Apostle gives this direction (*James 1. 5.*) *If any man lack wisdom, (he speaks of a man in a troublous condition, in a time of temptation) let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.* God hath wisdom enough for us, and can make us wise enough; apply to him, and you may be supplied for all occasions.

Fifthly, If God be mighty in strength of wisdom, then confidently cast your care on him, put your all into his hand, (*Psal. 37. 3.*) *Commit thy way to the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring*

it to passe. (Prov. 16. 3.) *Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established*; that is, thy thoughts about thy works, and usually our thoughts are more unsetled than our works. When we have left a matter in the hand of a wise man, how confident are we, and how composed are our thoughts, as to the well-issuing of it! how much more may we be confident, and composed, when we have believingly left our matters in the hand of the only Wise God!

Sixthly, If the Lord be so mighty in Wisdome, that he only is Wise, then beware of trusting to your own wisdom, or of being wise in your own eyes. That's the counsel of Solomon the wise, (Prov. 3. 5.) *Lean not to thy own understanding*. We are apt to lean too much to the understanding of others; if we have such a wise man to counsel us, we think all's safe, we are *Cock-sure* (as we say) the work cannot miscarry. 'Tis dangerous to lean to the understanding of others, but much more to lean to our own. Remember God is only Wise, and we never shew our selves more fools, than when we lean to our own wisdom, or think to carry it by our own wit, and so depart from the wisdom of God. *Therefore be fools, be nothing in your own wisdom, and you shall be wise with the wisdom of God.*

Thus I have prosecuted the Text according to our Translation.

There is yet another reading as to both the parts of this 5th verse, which I shall touch a little, because they are much insisted upon by Learned Interpreters.

The former part of this verse, which we render *Behold God is mighty, and despiseth not any*, is thus rendred, *Behold God is mighty, and despiseth not the mighty*. The vulgar Latine, thus, *God doth not cast away the mighty, seeing he himself also is mighty*. The scope of this Translation, is thus conceived. Job in the 29th Chapter of this Book, having set forth his own mightinesse or greatness, complained in the 30th, that notwithstanding all his former power and might, yet God had cast him down, and laid him in the dust. Here *Elihu* tells him, though God be mighty, yet he doth not despise the mighty; he doth not reject any man how high soever, because he is high, nor the great, how great soever, because great. God himself is great and mighty, and they that are like, (usually) rejoyce in those that are like them. Therefore God being

Eccle Deus potens, et non fastidit potentes, robore car- dit. Scult. Deus potentes non abieci, cum ei ipse sit potens. Vulg. Ut haec explicatio verbum Hebraei conveniat, et au, quod sepe fit, redundante verbi potest.

Ecce Deus
potentem
non fastidit,
vel, Ecce De-
us potens non
fastidit se po-
tentem. Cum
enim verbo
illo accusati-
vus addendus
sit, satis est
ea præcedenti.
רַבִּי Potentem
repetere,
quam obiectum
eius mente fin-
gers. Scult.

Non potentia
iusta sed actio
prava damna-
tur. Greg. l.
26. c. 24.

being mighty himself, doth not despise or reject those that are mighty, because they are so; there must be some other reason (it is not their mightiness) why God despises and casts down the mighty. *God is mighty, and despiseth not the mighty.*

Hence Note.

The great God is no enemy to greatness.

God doth not despise the mighty, the Kings and Princes of the Earth, as they are such; he hath no antipathy in him against greatness, nor doth he reject any man because he is great; if he doth at any time reject a great man, it is because of the abuse of his greatness: God dislikes no mans just power, but the unjust exercise of that power. The Authority and Power of man over man is of God, therefore God doth not despise men because they are in power. He ordaineth Powers, *There is no Power but of God, the Powers that be, are ordained* (or as our Margin hath it, *ordered*) of God. He puts power into the hands of men, and disposeth of their power. God cannot despise his own Ordination. 'Tis the abuse of Power, and not the Power it self, which the Lord sets himself against, and that indeed he doth set himself against; he despiseth the most mighty and powerful Princes of the World, when they instead of governing, are only vexing others with their Power: This causeth him to *pour contempt upon Princes* (Psal. 107. 40.) and renders *him terrible to the Kings of the Earth* (Psal. 76. 12.) Yet the Lord is never so angry with, nor doth he so aggravate the faults of those that are in Power, as to make Power it self faulty. Indeed, when great and mighty men turn their Power into oppression, then the Lord speaks as if he had conceived a displeasure against all great and mighty men, yet he is not displeased with their greatness, but with the mis-improvement of their greatness, and mal-administration of their Power. The Prophet puts the Question (*Hab. 3. 8.*) *Was the Lord displeased against the Rivers? was thine anger against the Rivers? was thy wrath against the Sea?* What was the reason why God turned the River of Nilus in Egypt, into blood? What was the reason why God divided the Red Sea? Was he wrath with the River, or with the Sea? No, he was wrath with the great Ones of Egypt, his wrath was against *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians*. Such an expression we have (*Nahum 1. 4.*) *He rebuketh the Sea, and maketh it dry,*
and

and dryeth up all the Rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the Flower of Lebanon languisheth. What was the meaning of all this? it only signified that the Lord was highly displeased with the great and mighty Ones of the world, who were to others, as the Sea is to a River, and as Carmel and Lebanon were to the Plains and low Valleys of the Earth, exceeding them in height and greatnesse; I say, he was highly displeased with them, because these carried it amiss in the exercise of their high Power; it was not because they were high and great, but because they had not exalted God in their highnesse, nor acted towards man as became those who were advanced above, and over other men. Thus all along the Lord speaks against, and rebukes the high and mighty, upon no other account but the unrighteous administration of their might & highnesse. God quarrels with no man meerly for his might.

The Histories of all Ages have reported the great and mighty men of the World, opposing the mighty, purely because they were so. Some say they did it out of Reason of State, but the true Reason of it, usually was their own pride, or envy, because they could not bear those that were equal with them, as Pompey, much lesse a Superiour, as Caesar could not. Or it was out of fear that the great would undermine their greatnesse, or bring them down. Thus mighty men oppose the mighty, as mighty; but the Lord is infinitely above these thoughts, *He is mighty, and he despiseth not the mighty*, nor doth he set himself against them, because they are mighty. *The liberal* (Isa. 32. 8.) *deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand*. David a great Prince, prayed (Psal. 51. 12.) that God would *establiish him by his free* (or Princely) *Spirit*; that being a mighty King, he might never any more entertain low and unworthy thoughts of any man, nor do any thing unworthy of God, or of himself.

Again, Our Translation distributes the latter part of the verse into two Branches of the mightinesse of God. *He is mighty, first, in strength*; and secondly, *In wisdom*. This, by others, is rendred a single Proposition. *He is mighty in strength of heart*. Strength of heart may be taken three wayes: First, For courage in dangers. Secondly, For patience in troubles. Thirdly, For noblenesse and greatnesse of mind, in all we do. In this third or last sense, we are to understand it here; as if *Elihu* had said, *The Reason why the Lord being mighty, doth not despise the mighty, is this*

*Superbia pr-
rem non fert.*

*Magnificens
magnificentias
cogitabit. Heb.*

*Maximus vir-
tute cordis.*

Coc.

*כִּי־חֲזָק
Potens est ro-
bore cordis, i. e.
valet animi
præstantia,
est magni ani-
mi ergo opera
manuum sua-
rum non con-
terunt. Merc.*

this, Because he excels all others, not only in mightiness and power, but in the nobleness of his Spirit. The Lord hath such an heroicall Spirit, that he can do nothing below or unbecoming himself. This is an excellent reading of the words. Take two Notes from it. First, By way of Assertion. Secondly, By way of Illation. By way of Assertion, thus,

The Lord hath a wonderful noble heart, and magnificent Spirit.

He hath not only an outward power (as many have) but an inward power; he is not only *Master of others*, but, as I may say, he is *Master of himself*. Many are Masters of others, who are not at all Masters of themselves; they are mighty in the strength of hand, yet weak as to strength of heart. The inward excellency and mightiness of the heart of God, may be seen eminently in a threefold respect.

First, The Lord is mighty of heart, as to patience and long-sufferance, in bearing with those that are evil. The Lord is infinitely above that patience which consists in the bearing of evil, (though that as was toucht before, shews much strength of heart) but he is continually in the exercise of that patience, which consists in bearing with those that are evil. And O how great is the strength and might of Gods heart in this! Some of the Rab-
חכ בל
עצמו. דומה.bies translate the Original Text, *long-suffering*. The Prophet *Nahum* speaks of God, *as slow to anger, and great in power*, (Chap. 1. 3.) It argueth strength of heart indeed, when we can stop and bridle our boisterous and angry passions, towards those that have offended us. The Lord saith unto, or concerning *Pharaoh* (Exod. 9. 16.) *And in very deed, for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power, &c.* What power? The Lord shewed forth a twofold power in the raising up of *Pharaoh*: First, the power of his Arm, that he was able to cast down such a mighty Prince. Secondly, The power of his Patience, that he spared him from ruin till he had sent ten messages to him, and poured ten Plagues upon him. The Lord was so provoked by *Pharaoh*, that he might have crushed him upon the first denial, but he forbore him long; the Lord might well say, *I have set thee up that I might shew forth my power, my power in forbearing thee long, as well as in destroying thee at last*. The Apostle speaks of this power (Rom. 9. 22.) *What if*

God

God willing to ſhew his wrath, and make his power known (the Lord will not only ſhew his wrath hereafter in breaking thoſe veſſels of deſtruction, but he ſhews his power now in ſuffering them long, and therefore he to make his power known) endured with much long-ſuffering the Veſſels of wrath ſitted to deſtruction. Here's the ſtrength of the Lords heart, he bears long with wicked men.

Secondly, There is a mighty power or ſtrength of heart in God, as in long-ſuffering towards impenitent ſinners, ſo in pardoning ſinners who repent. Who, but the Lord hath ſuch a ſtrength of Spirit, to pardon and paſſe by offences! After the People of *Magis enim eſt ignoſcere.* *Sola ſublimis et excelsa virtus eſt, nec quicquam magnū, niſi quod ſimul placet.* *Sen.* *I*ſrael had mutined, and murmured, and ſo provoked the Lord to the height, *Moses* begs and beſpeaks the power of the Lords pardoning-mercy, (*Numb. 14. 17.*) And now I beſeech thee let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou haſt ſpoken, ſaying, The Lord is long-ſuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity, &c. As if *Moses* had laid, Lord, thou muſt put forth as much power in pardoning the ſins of this People, as ever thou didſt in delivering them from their bondage-ſufferings in Egypt. Or thus, O Lord, thou mighteſt magnifie the power of thine anger in puniſhing this rebellious People, but rather magnifie the power of thy patience and long-ſufferance in ſparing and pardoning them. O what ſtrength of heart is in God, who paſſeth by the great tranſgreſſions of his People!

Thirdly, The Lord hath a mightineſſe of heart in executing his wrath upon his incorrigible enemies, (*Pſal. 90. 11.*) Who knoweth the power of thine anger? The anger of God is ſuch a thing as no man can go to the bottome of it in his thoughts. The Lords wrath is powerful, beyond all imagination and apprehenſion; his anger, as well as his love, paſſeth knowledge. In all theſe reſpects the Lord hath ſtrength of heart, or he is mighty in ſtrength of heart, as well as in hand or arm. The greateſt diſcoveries of Gods power, are in the wayes of his mercy. His Judgements are called his ſtrange work, but his mercy is his ſtrength, as the Prophet calls it, (*Iſa. 27. 5.*) where warning the *Bryars* and *Thorns* to take heed of warring with God, he gives a ſinner this counſel, Let him take hold of my ſtrength, that he may make peace with me, and he ſhall make peace with me. But what is meant by the ſtrength of God? Some render, Let him take hold of my Tower. A Tower is a place of ſtrength, but here put for that which

B b

which God.

which God glories in most, as his chiefest strength, even his goodnesse, mercy, patience, and long-sufferance, yea Christ himself; as if he had said, *Let not the sinner struggle with my strength, let him not think by strong hand to overcome my strength, but let him take hold of my Christ, through whom all those glorious perfections of mine, my Goodnesse, Mercy, Patience, &c. are given out to the children of men, and he shall make peace with me.* This is the true strength of God; nor doth any thing more set forth the strength of man, than this, that he is ready to pardon, to forgive, and passe by; only impotent spirits are much for revenge. 'Tis our weaknesse not to passe by wrongs and injuries done to us. To bear wrongs is to be like the high and mighty God, to bear them in mind, is to be like the lowest and weakest spirited men. He is strong indeed, who is strong in patience against Offenders, and as strong in mercy to pardon humble ones, as in power to punish stubborn and rebellious ones.

Secondly, By way of Relation.

Note.

'Tis the greatness of Gods Spirit, or the strength of his heart and mind, which moderates him towards sinful man.

That which keeps men in a moderate frame towards men, is true greatness of spirit: They that are of such a spirit, will neither despise those that are below them, nor envy those that are above them, nor willingly oppose those that are equal to them. The envy and opposition of others greatness, ariseth from the meannesse and weaknesse of our own spirits. The reason why one man is afraid that another should be high, is because himself hath not a real highnesse of spirit; or the reason why most oppose the greatness of others, is the littlenesse of their own spirits. Whence spring contentions and strifes, envyings, and underminings of one another? come they not from the narrownesse of our hearts, that we cannot rejoyce in the good of others, or from the impotent jealousies of our hearts, that we fear others will do us hurt? If such a one get up, he will pull me down; if such a one be high, 'tis dangerous to me, therefore I must pull him down, if I can; whence comes this, but from lownesse and poornesse of spirit, from that pitiful thing in man, called Pusillanimity. The Lord hath so great a Spirit, that as he envieth no mans greatness,

so

to he feareth no mans greatneſs, and therefore doth that which is juſt and equal to all ſorts of men, bad and good, as is further ſhewed in the next verſe.

Verſ. 6. *He preſerveth not the life of the wicked, but giveth right to the poor.*

As if Elihu had ſaid, Though the Lord doth not deſpiſe any that are great, yet he doth not reſpect any that are bad; he preſerveth not the life of the wicked. And as the Lord will not do any wrong to the rich, ſo, to be ſure, he will give right to the poor. What Elihu had affirmed of God, he now proveth by inſtances or particulars, and that both in reſpect of the wicked and the godly. That the Lord is moſt juſt and righteous he proveth thus,

He preſerveth not the life of the wicked.

That's the firſt inſtance, and he expreſſeth it negatively, *He preſerveth not the life of the wicked, he maketh not, or ſuffereth not the wicked to live.* The Hebrew ſtrictly is, *He doth not enliven the wicked:* So the word is uſed concerning the Midwives that feared God, (*Exod. 1. 17.*) *They did not obey the word of the King, but ſaved the Male Children alive, or, they enlivened the Male children.* They who preſerve, do, upon the matter, give a new life. The like Expreſſion we have (*Exod. 18. 22.*) *Thou ſhalt not ſuffer a Witch to live:* The Hebrew is, thou ſhalt not vivifie or enliven a Witch. They who have commerce with the Devil, the Prince of the Air, they who Trade with Hell, to ſatiſfie the luſts and curioſities of evil men on earth, are not worthy to breathe in the Air, or live upon the face of the Earth. *He preſerveth not the life of the wicked.* There are two things in this negative ſpeech of Elihu.

First, God doth not ſhew any favour to, nor indulge wicked men in their evil wayes. He that will not ſo much as preſerve their lives, doth not give them favour while they live. Life and favour are two diſtinct things, (*Job 10. 12.*) *Thou haſt granted me life and favour.* Favour with life is the priviledge of the living; favour is better than life. The Lord doth but ſeldome reſprieve, much leſs doth he at any time favour or pardon impenitently wicked men.

Secondly, When Elihu ſaith, *he preſerveth not the life of the wicked,*

*Non vivificat
ἀνθρώπους, pro
interficiat, et
omni vita spo-
liat, &c.*

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wicked, we are to understand it by an ordinary Figure, wherein less is expressed, than is to be understood; *He preserveth not*, that is, first, he is not solicitous about their preservation, he cares not much what becomes of them; and not only so, but Secondly, he destroyeth the life of the wicked; the Lord will certainly ruine and utterly undoe them, one time or other, one way or other; he will do it either immediately, by his own Arme, by some notable stroke of vengeance from himself: or he will do it by means, he will find out, and impower instruments, that shall destroy the very life of the wicked. And I conceive *Elihu* brings in this Proposition concerning God, in answer to what *Job* had observed and complainingly alleadged about the Prosperity of the wicked, (*Chap. 21. 7.*) *Wherefore doth the wicked live, become old, yea are mighty in power?* As if *Job* had intimated, that the Lord surely did shew, not only some, but much respect unto wicked men; they did not only live, but they lived a long time, and not only a long time a bare life, but were mighty in power, and over-powered, yea, oppressed many with their might. *Elihu* replyeth here, notwithstanding this Allegation (which seemed to reflect upon the Justice of God) that *the Lord preserveth not the Life of the wicked*. Mark, first, he doth not say, *he preserveth not the Life of a man that sinneth*, for then whose life should be preserved? but, *he preserveth not the life of the wicked*; that is, of a man who sinneth presumptuously, and goeth on impenitently, who is incorrigible. Secondly, he doth not say, God suffereth not a wicked man to live, for then (most men being wicked in all Ages of the world) the world would be very thin, and almost naked, of Inhabitants: But *he preserveth not* (saith he) *the life of the wicked*; that is, he sets no store by them, as we do of those things, which we carefully preserve. We may compare this verse with that of *Job* (*Chap. 34. 26, 27, 28.*) where 'tis said of mighty oppressors, the Lord *strikerh them as wicked men* (that is, as he useth to strike wicked men) *in the open sight of others; because they turned back from him, and would not consider any of his wages: So that they canſet the cry of the poor to come up to him, and he heareth the cry of the afflicted*. Now, as there *Elihu* speaks affirmatively, *he striketh wicked men*, so here he speaks negatively (which is the same in effect) *God doth not preserve the life of the wicked*; and as there he said, *God heareth the cry of the afflicted, or poor*, so here,

he

he giveth right to the poor. These Texts are of the same sence, and expound each other. From the former part of this sixth verse already opened, *he preserveth not the life of the wicked,*

Observe, First;

wicked men are out of Gods Protection; they can expect no favour from him;

They are out-lawed. Some persons are out-lawed by men, and then if any man injure them, or kill them, they can have no remedy by the Law; they have their amends (as we say) in their own hands, the Law gives them none. *Wicked men are out of Gods love, and therefore out of his care; he turns them up (as we say) to the wide World to shift for themselves: whether they sink or swim, 'tis all one to him. He is neither Sun nor Shield to the wicked, he is both to the godly, (Psal. 84. 11.) The Lord is a Sun and a Shield, the Lord will give Grace and Glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. As a Sun he giveth out the warm Beams of his favour, to refresh and revive them, when the World leaves them cold and comfortless: And as a Shield he defends and saves them, when the World strikes at them and vexes them; he will keep them safe from evil, as with a Shield. The wicked have no share in this, nor in any such-like promise; the Lord is rather Fire and Sword, than Sun or Shield to them; he neither comforts them while they live, nor preserves their lives from death.*

But some may say, Doth not God preserve the lives of the wicked? Is it not said (Job 7. 20.) *He is the preserver of men?* Which indefinite seems to carry it for all men: And (Psal. 36. 6.) *Thou preservest man and beast.* Yea, wicked men not only live, but prosper and flourish in the World, as Job complained, (Chap. 21. 7.) *Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?* Surely then they are preserved, and if God do not preserve them, who doth? Man hath no more power to preserve his own life, than to give himself life; how is it then that the Text saith, God doth not preserve them? or that they are out of Gods Protection?

I answer, First, It cannot be denied, but that the wicked hold their lives, and all the good things they have (possibly they have many good things) of God. But the wicked, and their lives,

or the lives of the wicked, are preserved only by that common Providence of God, which extends even to the Beasts of the field; they are not preserved by any special Providence or Promise of preservation made to them: their *Souls are not bound in the bundle of life with the Lord their God*, as *Abigail* assured *David* his should be (1 Sam. 25. 29.) nor are they, as one very well expresth it in the Language of the Prophet *Isaiah* (Chap. 4. 3.) written (or reckoned) *among the living in Jerusalem*. Neither their life, nor their death, is precious in the Lords sight, as both of the meanest Saints are (Psal. 116. 15.) The special Promises of preservation are made to the godly; the common Providences of preservation extend to the wicked. God preserves many wicked men, but not one of them can plead a Promise for his preservation, or say, Lord, thou hast undertaken to preserve me, I have thy Word or Warrant for my preservation. So then, the Lord doth not preserve the life of any wicked man upon a word of Promise.

Secondly, I answer, When the lives of the wicked are preserved, they are not preserved for any love which God bears to their persons as such, but either, First, to bring them into a better state, that is, to turn them from their wickedness, that being converted, they may be saved at last, according to his purpose: Or, Secondly, they are preserved, to serve some ends and purposes of his in this World. For though God hath no pleasure in them, yet he makes some use of them, and doth his pleasure by them; Or, I may say, they are preserved to be Executioners of his displeasure, in chastening and correcting his own people. The King of *Assyria* was preserved in great Power; and to what end? *I will send him against an hypocritical Nation*, (Isa. 10. 6.) He must go on my Errand, though he meaneth not so, nor doth his heart think so, (as the Lord spake, vers. 7.) He hath other matters and designs in his head, but I have this use of him, and of his power, even to punish the people of my wrath. The Lord made use also of *Nebuchadnezzar*, and his Army, to serve him in the destroying of *Tyrus*, and of him and his Army he saith, *They wrought for me*, (Ezek. 29. 20.) Thus the Lord doth some of his work, his strange work especially, his work of Judgment, by the hands of wicked men; and therefore he preserves their lives. Yea, he preserves them many a time to be a help and a defence to his people.

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A Thorn Hedge keeps the Pasture, that strange Cattle break not in, and eat it up. Wicked men are as Bryars and Thorns, and they are suffered to live, because the Lord can make use of them as a Fence to his people. When the Serpent cast out of his mouth water as a Flood after the woman (the Church) that he might cause her to be carryed away of the Flood, then the Earth (that is, earthly, carnal men) helped the Woman (Rev. 12. 15, 16.) The Lord used bad men to do that good work, the preservation of his distressed and persecuted Church.

Thirdly, As the Lord suffers many wicked men to live, that they may be brought out of their sins, so he suffers others to live that they may fill up the measure of their sins. Why did the Lord preserve the Amorites? was it because he loved or liked them? no, but because they were not then ripe for Judgment, (Gen. 15. 16.) *The Iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.* Some wicked men are to fill up their dayes, that they may fill up the measure of their Fathers sins, by their own, as Christ threatned the Scribes and Pharisees, (Math. 23. 32.) Such a grant of life, though for a thousand years, is worse than a thousand Deaths.

Fourthly, we may answer, The wicked are not so much preserved from, as reserved unto further wrath, (2 Pet. 2. 9.) *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of Judgment, to be punished.* God doth not presently punish all the wicked, nor take away their lives; there is a day of Judgment coming, and till that day come, their lives are preserved, as persons reserved unto Judgment.

Fifthly, VVhen wicked men are said to be out of the Lords Protection, consider, There is a twofold Protection; First, ordinary; Secondly, extraordinary. The Lord doth preserve and protect wicked men in an ordinary, not in an extraordinary way; he doth not work wonders, much less miracles, to preserve them, as he often doth for the preservation of his own people. God will not be at such cost in preserving of wicked men, as he is at in the preserving the lives and liberties of his eminent Servants; rather than they shall perish, or not be preserved, he will sometimes work a miracle, and put Nature out of its course, to save their lives. VVhen those three VVorthies were cast into the midst of the burning fiery Furnace, God stopt the rage of that furious Element, that the Fire had no power upon their bodies, nor

was an hair of their head singed, neither were their Coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them, (Dan. 3. 27.) Did we ever hear that the Lord restrained the power of the fire, to preserve wicked men? When *Daniel*, a man precious in the sight of God, was cast into the Lions Den, the Lord preserved his life also, by stopping the Mouths of the Lyons, (Dan. 6. 22.) Did we ever hear that God preserved the lives of wicked men in such a way? No sooner were *Daniels* accusers cast into the Lyons Den, but the Lyons had the Mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces, ere ever they came to the bottome of the Den, (v. 24.) The Lord doth not preserve the lives of the wicked, by miraculous manifestations of his Power and Glory.

Sixthly, I answer, Though some wicked men are commonly preserved, as other men, yet many by their wickedness, hasten their ruine, and shorten the number of their dayes. We may distinguish of wicked men; First, wicked men may be taken in a General notion, for all that are unconverted, and unregenerate. Many persons pass for honest and good men in the world, who yet are wicked, being carnal, and abiding in a state of nature: wicked men of this sort, are ordinarily preserved. Secondly, Take wicked men (and such I conceive the Text especially intends) for notorious wicked men, such as are murderers, blasphemers, &c. the Lord doth not preserve the lives of such, but lets mans Justice seize upon them, or divine vengeance overtake them (Psal. 55. 23.) *The blood-thirsty and detestful man shall not live out half his dayes*; that is, he shall not live half so long as he might, according to the course of Nature, because of his nefarious sinful courses. Histories are full of dreadful Tragedies, testifying to this Truth, with the blood and untimely death of gross offenders. How often have we seen or heard of the Vengeance of God following and falling upon those that were (*signanter*) notoriously wicked; and of these we are especially to understand the Poynt and Text, *He preserveth not the life of the wicked*. Take this Inference from all that hath been said about this awakening Observation;

How sad is the life of a wicked man! indeed of any man on this side the Line of grace, but especially of any very wicked man! He can scarce be said to live, whose life is not preserved by God; a wicked man is alwayes in death, seeing God doth not preserve his life. The Apostle *Paul* said he was *in Deaths offense*,
but

but God had as often preserved his life ; but they are in Deaths alwayes, whose life God never preserveth. VVhat preservation of life can he have, who hath not God for his preserver ? God in Creation or Propagation giveth us our life as to being ; but Preservation gives us our life as to well being. Can it be well with them that are not under the preservation of God ? To be redeemed by Christ would be but a small comfort, unless we were also preserved by him. (*Jude 1.*) *To them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.* If we were only redeemed from death, and not preserved in life, what were our spiritual life to us ? So I may say in respect of the life of the body ; to be meerly created or propagated, what is it, if we are not preserved ? 'Tis a high Priviledge, when a man can, not only say, he hath received life from God, but his life is preserved by God. That's the first poynt. *He preserveth not the Life of the wicked.*

Again, From that other Interpretation of the words, as. not to preserve is as much as to destroy and ruine,

Note,

As God utterly disowneth, so he will at last utterly ruine all wicked men.

He not only doth not favour them, but *pours out fury upon them,* (*Jer. 10. 25.*) *Pour out thy fury upon the Heathen that know thee not, and upon the Families that call not on thy Name.* The Prophecie of *Isaiah* speaks no better concerning them than that prayer of *Jeremy.* (*Isa. 3. 11.*) *Wo unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hand shall be given him.* And what can the hand of a wicked man earn ? the wages of sin is death ; he can get nothing but wrath, and death, nothing but tribulation and anguish here, and eternal misery hereafter, by the work of his hands. VVoe to the wicked, for the reward of his hands shall be given him, that is, eternal destruction and sorrow shall be given him, according to the iniquity of his hand. *A godly man is rewarded according to the cleanness of his hands* (*Psal. 18. 20, 24.*) He labours to keep his hands, (much more his heart clean, whatever the VVorld judge of him) But woe to the wicked when God giveth them the reward of their hands, of their unclean, foul and filthy hands ; for what can such hands get or procure by all their

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labour

labour but their own mischief and sorrow? *There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked,* (Isa. 57. 21.) No peace is to them, because no good is done by them: their portion lyes in promises, who keep Commandements, so theirs must needs lye in threatnings, who do nothing but break them, or break them in all they do. *My meditation of him shall be sweet, I will be glad in the Lord,* (said David, Psal. 104. 34.) As if he had said, I know that I and every Godly man, shall receive so much good from the Lord, that it doth me good at the heart to think of it: But as for the wicked, I can fore-see (as we say) with half an eye, how ill it will be with them, and so let it be; I must subscribe to, and vote with the righteous judgement of the Lord against them (ver. 35.) *Let the sinners be consumed out of the Earth, and let the wicked be no more.*

Lastly, Consider these words, *He preserveth not the life of the wicked,* with respect to the wicked, specially intended and treated of in this Context, *The Lord is mighty, and despiseth not the mighty* (because they are mighty) *he preserveth not the wicked.*

Hence Note;

Wicked men, how mighty soever, cannot preserve themselves, nor doth the Lord undertake for their preservation.

The strongest of wicked men, cannot stand by their own strength, they cannot protect nor preserve themselves, and the Lord will not put forth his strength to preserve them from falling. As no mightiness, no power can bear man up, or maintain him against the Lord, so not without the Lord; if he preserveth not the life of the wicked, they cannot escape death and destruction, though high as Cedars, and strong as Oakes. They cannot but perish, whom God preserveth not. *He preserveth not the life of the wicked,*

But giveth right to the poor.

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cti.

Or to the afflicted. Poverty it self is a great affliction, and usually the poor are afflicted by others. Here is a second instance of Gods goodnesse in the exercise of his power and might. As *He preserveth not the life of the wicked,* So *he giveth right to the poor;* as he destroyeth wrong-doers, so he will do right to those that suffer wrong. Every word is considerable, First, *He giveth;* that's

that's an act of bounty. Secondly, *He giveth right*; that's an act of equity. And that Thirdly, *To the poor*; that's an act of pity and charity.

Further, When 'tis said, *He giveth*, that implies, First, a present or speedy act; Secondly, a constant and settled course of acting. As the word *giveth* imports, that the Lord doth it now, and doth not put it off to hereafter only; so it likewise importeth that the Lord will do it hereafter, as well as now. *He giveth*

Right to the poor.

The poor suffer wrong, but the Lord comes, and gives them *right*, or rights them, and that in a twofold notion. First, He gives them that right which is due to them, according to his own righteous *Laws*, or the righteous Laws of men. That's right done, which is done according to a righteous Law. Secondly, He giveth them that right which is due to them according to the integrity of their own hearts and wayes. We may say, Thirdly, The Lord giveth them right, not according to the strictnesse of the Law, but according to the integrity of their hearts. Thus David prayed (*Psal. 7. 3.*) *Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me*; that is, according to my honest meaning, and the simplicity of my Soul. As if he had said, *O Lord, do me right; men have done me wrong, they have false and wrong apprehensions of me, they raise false reports concerning me, but thou, O Lord, who knowest my integrity wilt judge me accordingly, and 'tis my humble and earnest Prayer that thou wouldst.* *He giveth right*

To the poor.

The poor in Scripture are taken two wayes; First, as they stand in opposition to the rich; Secondly, as they are opposed to the proud; thus here, he giveth right to the poor, as well as to the rich; and he will especially give right to the humble poor, to the righteous poor, to the poor in spirit. Such the Prophet speaks of (*Isa. 66. 2.*) *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor.* He means not the poor in purse (as such) he means not those (as such) who wear poor cloaths, the Lord doth not always look to, or respect such poor, for many such are both proud and wicked; but he looks to him that is poor in spirit, or of a contrite spi-

Nomen pauperis in bonum sumitur, pauperes sunt populi Dei.

rit; let such be in Rags, and lye upon the Dunghil, the Lord will look to them; and he hath a threefold look for them. First, A look of honour, as respecting their Persons. Secondly, A look of care, to supply their wants. Thirdly, A look of justice, to deliver them from wrong. And if they that are poor in spirit, be rich also in the world, they shall not fail to receive right from the hand of the Lord. The Lord giveth right to all sorts of men against their wicked oppressors; but his poor, the Godly poor, believing poor, those that are poor not only in purse, but in spirit, are more peculiarly under this priviledge, of being righted by the Lord. And usually in Scripture, the word *poor* is taken in a good sence, for good men, as the word *rich*, in an ill sence, for evil men (*Jam. 5. 1.*) *Go to now ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you.* The Apostle speaks as if that were the case of all rich, or as if he called all rich men to weeping and howling, &c. Yet some poor men are wicked, and some rich men are righteous; and therefore I conceive the word *poor* may be taken here for any wronged or oppressed poor, yet especially for the Godly poor. For though God giveth right to all men, even the worst of men, yet here the scope of *Elihu* is to shew that God takes most care of those whom the wicked do most, not only neglect, but injure and oppress, *He giveth right to the poor.*

Hence Note;

The poor, especially the Godly poor, are often wronged, and go by the worst in the world. Or thus:

The poor, as poor, usually suffer from, and by the world.

As the world is apt to oppress any poor, so mostly the Godly poor, (*Psal. 12. 5.*) *For the oppression of the poor I will arise.* 'Tis possible a rich man may be oppressed, a mighty man may be oppressed by one mightier than he; but usually the poor are oppressed, and they trampled on, who are already underfoot. And therefore the Lord saith, *For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, and set him at safety from him that puffeth at him.* This is not exclusive, the Lord will arise for the help of the rich and great, when any such are wronged; but he is said to arise for the help of the poor, as intimating that the poor seldome come by their right, or find help in the world, unless God

God arise to help them, or help them to it; and because he hath said he will help them to their right, we may be sure he will. Davids Faith was strong upon this promise, (*Psal. 18. 27.*) *Thou wilt save the afflicted people.* (*Psal. 72. 4.*) *He shall judge the poor of the People.* (*Psal. 140. 12.*) *I know that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted.* And his Experience was as clear, as his Faith was strong (*Psal. 37. 25.*) *I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken; that is, I have often, yea alwayes seen him helped one way or other; and sometimes set on high from affliction,* (*Psal. 107. 41.*) The Lord careth so for the poor, as if he cared for none else; and the best of the poor are little cared for by any, but the Lord. (*Zeph. 3. 12.*) *I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the Name of the Lord.* The rich of this world trust to creature helps, but as the Lords poor know they ought not to trust in creature help, so they have it not to trust to, and therefore they trust in the Name of the Lord, not only out of choice (which is their grace and duty) but out of necessity. And what will the Lord do for them that trust in him, not only out of necessity but choice? he will surely take care of them, and do them right.

Secondly, Note;

God rights the poor freely.

He giveth them right, he doth not sell it. What freer than gift? They need not bribe for it. As he freely giveth them the Righteousnesse of his Son to justifie them, so they have common right of free gift to relieve them.

Note Thirdly;

The Lord relieves, or rights the poor speedily.

He giveth, implyeth a present act, and that doubles the mercy.

Note Fourthly;

God will always right the wronged poor.

He giveth, imports even a continued act; as he did it in former times, in the dayes of old, so he doth it at this day, and will do it always. As the Lord giveth right speedily, so constantly, with him is no variableness or shadow of turning. Most men do
right

right only by fits, but the Lord is ever giving right.

Lastly, *He giveth right to the poor, not to this, or that poor man, but to the poor.*

Hence Note ;

The Lord distributeth right to all that are wronged.

As his Mercy, so his Justice is not confined to a few, but floweth out to all.

But it may be objected, *why then are so many poor without their right ? If the Lord giveth right, and giveth it continually, and impartially, why do the poor cry, and sigh, and groan, and mourn ? why see we so many tears of the poor ? If they have right, why do they complain ?*

I answer,

First, The Lord giveth right to the poor, sometimes, when the poor perceive it not. (*Psal. 97. 2.*) *Clouds and darknesse are round about him, Righteousnesse and Judgement are the habitation of his Throne.* When a man cannot see the Lord doing right, yet the Lord doth right. The Sun shineth when eclipsed or covered with a Cloud. The Lord never ceaseth to right the poor, though neither poor nor rich perceive how, or which way he doth it.

Secondly, I answer, He giveth right to the poor, even when they want right, or when they are under the sorest oppressions, by supporting their hearts in this perswasion, that he will give them right. The poor have right when their minds are satisfied that they shall have right. There is no true Godly poor man in the world, how much soever afflicted, but his heart is, or may be satisfied, that he shall have right. That's a sure word (*Psal. 9. 18.*) *The needy shall not always be forgotten, the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever.* And therefore we may pray with confidence, *Forget not, O Lord, the Congregation of thy poor for ever,* (*Psal. 74. 19.*) The poor may rest in this assurance, while their troubles rest upon them, that God will bring forth their Righteousnesse as the Light, and their Judgement as the Noon-day, (*Psal. 37. 6.*) He hath right, who believes he shall have it ; as he that believeth, hath everlasting life in hope, long before he attains the possession of it, (*John 3. 36.*)

Thirdly, Though we say, The Lord giveth right to the poor, both speedily and constantly, yet he reserveth to himself a liberty

ty as to time, and means, and manner; as in all his outward Administrations, so in ministring or giving out this right; the Lord waits to be gracious, till we are ready for his grace, and he waits (in the same sence) to be righteous, till the poor are ready for their right; they shall not stay for it, when once they are ready for it; and it would be a wrong to them to have their right, before they are ready for it.

Lastly, There is a day spoken of, wherein the Lord will do all his poor right in the view of all the world, (*Acts 17. 31.*) *He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the World in Righteousnesse, by that man whom he hath ordained.* The day approacheth, wherein the Lord will judge the world in righteousness. Right is prepared & designed for them. The time till right shall be done to all, as is desired, or to the utmost of their desires, maketh hast: *He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry; Behold (saith he) I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his works shall be, (Rev. 22. 12.)* And if the Lord come with a reward in his hand for those who have done well, he will undoubtedly come with right in his hand to give all those who have suffered wrongfully.

JOB, Chap. 36. Vers. 7.

He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous : but with Kings are they on the throne, yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted.

THis verse contains a further confirmation of Gods righteous and gracious dealing with the righteous and gracious poor, yea, with all that are righteous and gracious. The words may be taken, either in a stricter or in a larger sense.

First, Strictly, as an Exposition of the latter part of the former verse, *He giveth right to the poor*, that is, *He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous*: We may put both together, *He is so set to give right to the righteous poor, he takes such care of them, that he cannot take his eye off from them.*

Secondly, In a larger and more general sense, as a Conclusion upon the whole matter, that, *God will not desert any righteous person, whether poor or rich, high or low, God will take notice of piety and godliness, wheresoever he finds it,*

He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous.

וַיִּמְנֹוּ,
diminuit, ade-
mit, subtrahit.

The word which we translate *withdraweth*, and is here used negatively, *He withdraweth not*, signifies, strictly in the Noun, any kind of abatement or diminution, and in the Verb, to diminish, or abate, or take short in any kind that which was before. When Pharaoh (Exod. 5. 8.) gave out a fresh Charge for burdening, or indeed oppressing the Children of Israel in their bondage, the Order ran in this stile; *The tale of bricks which they did make heretofore you shall lay upon them, you shall not diminish or withdraw any, you shall not abate them a brick.* And Moses shewing how sacred a thing the Word of God is, (Dent. 9. 2.) gives a double check or prohibition to all medlers with it: First, to medlers by way of addition, *Ye shall not add unto the Word*: Secondly, by way of abatement, or abstraction, *Ye shall not diminish, or withdraw from it*: it is this word; As if the Lord had said, *Every tittle of my word shall stand by it self, and every Iota be established; be sure that ye put nothing to it, that you withdraw nothing*

nothing from it. Further, this word which we translate *withdraw*, is rendred also *to clip*, as the hayr of the head or beard is *clipt*, (*Jer. 48. 37.*) It is indeed high treason against the King of Heaven, to clip his coyn, his word, which bears the royal stamp, and superscription of his truth and holiness. Thus here, *he withdraweth not*, that is, the Lord doth not abate, lessen, diminish, or take off his eyes from the righteous, his eyes are fixed on them for good alwayes, and they are alwayes fixed in the same strength and vertue; *He withdraweth not*

His eyes.

God is a Spirit without parts and passions, yet often in Scripture parts and passions are ascribed to him in allusion to man, here eyes, *He withdraweth not his eyes*, that is, his sight, or his *Oculus domini* providence. And we may take notice, that in Scripture, where this *esse super aliquem, nisi aliquid additur* expression is used without any further addition, it is alwayes taken in a good sense. When we read either of Gods keeping his eyes upon his people, or of his not withdrawing his eyes from his people, it alwayes respects their priviledge, benefit and comfort; *He withdraweth not his eyes*

semper in bonum sumitur & peculiarem ejus favorem et curam importat.
Bold:

From the righteous.

He doth not say, from this or that righteous man, but from *the righteous*, implying the whole kind or generation of the righteous. The indefinite is universal; we may render it thus; he withdraweth not his eyes from any that are righteous. The righteous here may be taken in a two-fold notion, First, for the righteous, as to their state, or who are in a state of righteousness. Man wanting a righteousness of his own, hath the righteousness of another assigned and imputed to him. Justified persons through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, are righteous persons, as hath been shewed heretofore. Secondly, We may take *righteous* here, with respect to the righteousness of their wayes and actions: *They who do righteousness are righteous*, saith the Apostle John. For a righteous state, there belongs a righteous way, a righteous walk, righteous acting; not that the righteous do not sin, but they would not, nor do they sin at all as the unrighteous. It is a high blemish or staine to the Gospel, when any that pretend to a righteous state, or to righteousness by Jesus Christ, are not righteous as to their

D d

wayes

wayes and course, as to their walkings and workings, whether towards God or man. 'Tis true, in a strict legal sense, none are righteous, no not one; but in a Gospel sense all justified and sanctified persons are righteous; and they are called so, not only positively as to what themselves are, but comparatively, as to what the men of the world are, who live in a state or walk in a course of sin and unrighteousness. *The Lord withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous.*

But some may here object or question, Is this true only of the righteous? Doth the Lord at any time withdraw his eyes from the unrighteous? truly that would be very good newes to many unrighteous persons, they would be glad that they and their way might be hid from God, or that God would not look upon them.

I answer, This Scripture is not to be so understood, as if God did behold the righteous and not the wicked, for (*Prov. 15. 3.*) *The eyes of the Lord are every where, beholding the evil and the good*, whether things done or persons doing them. The Lord doth not withdraw his eyes from the most unrighteous persons, nor from any of their acts or wayes of unrighteousness. And when it is said here, *The Lord withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous*, it is meant of a peculiar eye, which the Lord hath upon the righteous; he beholds both the righteous and the unrighteous, yet he doth not behold the unrighteous, as he beholds the righteous; which I shall clear further by giving in a five-fold discovery, what that eye of the Lord is which is upon the righteous, foure of which are distinct and totally differing from that eye with which he beholdeth unrighteous men, and from every one of them I shall give you an observation for our further profiting by this general assertion, that *the Lord withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous*. There is a five-fold eye of God spoken of in Scripture.

First, There is a discerning eye, that eye by which he unerringly knoweth what every man is, and what every man doth.

Hence note;

The Lord taketh exact and full notice of, he clearly discerns the righteous in every condition.

This is true also of the unrighteous; therefore David puts it
univer-

universally, (*Psal. 11. 4.*) *His eyes behold, his eye-lids try the children of men*, that is, his sight discovers and discerns what they are, of what sort soever they are. We may see many men, yet not discover what they are, they may have a faire outside to our view, whilest within they are foule and full of rottenness; they may appear in Sheeps cloathing, yet inwardly be ravening Wolves. But the Lords eye is a trying eye, he doth not only know who men are, but he knows what they are. Such is the importance of that Scripture, (*Heb. 4. 13.*) *All things are naked and manifest to his eyes, with whom we have to do*; that is, the Lord doth so behold things and persons, that he hath a clear understanding of them. And though the Lords eye be thus upon all men, yet this is specially affirmed of righteous men, (*Psal. 33. 18.*) *Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, and hope in his mercy.* Again, (*Psal. 34. 15.*) *His eye is over the righteous.* Both texts teach us, that God considers not only *what they do*, but as I may say, *how they do*, whether it be peace with them, or whether it be trouble with them, whether it be joy with them, or whether it be sorrow with them, the Lords eye is over them, to discern, not only whether, and how they go, but how things go with them.

Secondly, The Lord hath a directing or a counselling eye.

Hence Note;

The Lord with his eye favourably guides, directs, and counsels righteous men.

This eye of the Lord, as it denotes favour, is peculiar to the righteous. We have that expressly, (*Psal. 32. 8.*) *I will instruct thee, and teach thee, (how?) I will guide thee with mine eye.* We put in the Margen, *I will counsel thee*, that is, thee a Godly man, a David, spoken of (*v. 6, 7.*) *mine eye shall give thee counsel.* Men can give direction by the eye, and they that are acquainted with them, understand what they mean when they look this way or that way, thus or so. Solomon saith, *A naughty person winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers,* (*Pro. 6. 12, 13.*) that is, all the postures and gestures of his body, shew what he is, stark naught, and silently teach others to be naught. The holy God also teacheth by his feet and fingers, his goings and doings, his workes and wayes teach us the work which we should do, and the way wherein we should go; he hath a pro-

vidential eye; the looks of providence give counsel to those who know how to look upon them, and interpret them. The Lord hath a providential eye upon the righteous, not only to foresee their dangers, but to direct their course; he sheweth them their way, and their work by this eye; he tells them what pleaseth him, and what displeaseth him, by this eye; this eye the Lord doth not withdraw from the righteous; *He will guide the feet of his Saints,* (1 Sam. 2. 9.) 'Tis possible for a righteous man sometime to be without counsel, he may neither know what counsel to give himself, nor what to take from others; as *Jehoshaphat* said in his streight (2 Chron. 20. 12.) *He knoweth not what to do;* yet (as *Jehoshaphat* said then) *his eyes are towards the Lord,* and the Lords eyes are towards him. When he is thus counsellors, there is a counselling, a directing eye of God upon him; though he at that present know not his way, yea, be out of his way, yet he is not out of Gods eye, and that will in due time shew him his way, or bring him into his way again: though God suffer him to go out of the way, yet the eye of God is upon him, even when he is out of his way, and that eye will reduce and bring him back to his right way. There is a directing, a counselling eye of God.

Thirdly, The Scripture speaks of a pitying and a compassionating eye of God. It is ordinary with us to hear those that are in distress cry out to those who pass by, *cast an eye upon us, look upon us;* and that is as much as to say, pity us, have compassion upon us; this eye of pity the Lord doth not withdraw from the righteous.

Hence note;

The righteous are under the compassionating, the pitying eye of God.

When the people of *Israel* were in *Egypt*, the Lord said to *Moses*, (Exod. 3. 7.) *I have surely seen the affliction of my people;* and what kind of sight was that? what eye of God was it which was upon them? the words following, and the whole series of Gods dealings also clear it, that it was an eye of compassion; *I have surely seen, or seeing I have seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt, &c. and I am come down to deliver them.* We read in that notable place, (Gen. 16. 14.) when *Hagar* was in a very sad and distressed condition, being cast out of *Abrahams* family,

family, God had compassion on her, and shewed her a Well, where she might have water for her self and child, and the text saith, *She called the name of the Well Beer-la-hai-roi*, that is, *the Well of him that liveth and seeth me*: As if she had said, *God hath seen me in my afflicted condition, and he hath also had compassion on me*. That's another great priviledge, the righteous are under this pitying and compassionating eye of God; and from thence follows,

The fourth eye of God, *his providing eye, his caring eye*.

Hence note;

The Lord doth so eye the righteous in their straits and afflictions with compassion, that he also provides to deliver them out of their affliction, out of their straits.

There is a providing eye of God continually beholding his people: Of this providing eye *Abraham* spake, (*Gen. 22. 14.*) when he was put upon that hard task, the sacrificing of his own son, his *Isaac*, the Lord had compassion on him, and provided another sacrifice, and therefore he called the name of that place, *Jehovah Jireh*, *the Lord will see or provide*; that is, as the Lord hath seen and provided for me, so he will see and provide for all his in their greatest exigents and extremities. What *Abraham* said, all the seed of *Abraham* may say in the day of their distress, *Jehovah Jireh, the Lord will see and provide*. And as the Lord hath a seeing and a providing eye for his in times of distress, so at all times. *Moses* said of the Land of *Israel*, (*Deut. 11. 12.*) *It is a Land of hills and of vallies, a Land which the Lord thy God careth for: The eyes of the Lord thy God are alwayes upon it, from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year*. The eyes of the Lord are upon the land, that is, upon the people of the land, or upon the land for the peoples sake who dwell in it: What to do? the text answers, *to care for it*, that is, to provide all things for their good, to give raine in season, and the fruits of the earth, not only for the support, but comfort of his people. We read of the same eye promised to the people of *Israel* in the Land of their captivity, (*Jer. 29. 6.*) *I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again into this Land*; I will not only give them a look, or a glance, but fix or set mine eyes upon them for good, that is, to do them good. It is a proverbial saying amongst us, *The Masters eye fattens the Horse*: The Masters eye is a caring, a providing eye,
he

he will take care that the Horse shall be well fed. Certainly, Gods eye is a fattening eye; they shall be fat and flourish, from whom God will not withdraw his providing eye, at least they shall have necessaries, or food convenient, both for soul and body.

Fifthly, The Scripture speaks of a delighting eye, or of an eye of complacency; and thus also the Lords eye is upon the righteous, he beholderth them with high content, he is, as I may say, taken with them, (*Isa. 66. 1.*) *To him will I look that is poor.* Among all objects, none so pleasant or pleasing to God as the poor. What poor doth he mean? surely the righteous poor, or the poor in spirit, (as was shewed upon the former verse) let such a one be whom he will, *to him will I look*, mine eye is greatly pleased to behold such a one. The word used by *Elihu* in this Text, doth further clear it, while he saith, *He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous.* How pleasant is any object to our eyes from which we cannot withdraw or take them off, but must be continually feeding them upon it! Some cannot take off their eyes from unlawfull wanton objects, because they are so delighted in them, they have as the Apostle Peter speaks, eyes full of adultery, and such can never glut their eyes with adulterous objects. Now certainly the Lord is exceedingly taken with the beauty, the spiritual beauty of a righteous person, with the comeliness, the spirituall comeliness of those that are godly, when the Text saith, *He withdraweth not his eyes from them*, but carries them (as it were) alwayes in his eye. Among the Latines, to carry one in our eye is an expression of singular high content, delight and pleasure taken in such a person. We may say of all the righteous, the Lord carrieth them in his eye, and therefore he is highly pleased and delighted with them.

*In oculis alique
quem gestare,
est cum veho-
menter amplexari
et diligere.*

Thus you have this five-fold eye, which the Lord doth *not withdraw from the righteous*; and, in that the text saith, he doth not withdraw or abate or diminish his eye from them, but looks fully upon them, it gives us this sixth note;

The inspection of God upon, his compassion towards, his care of, his delight in the righteous is perpetual.

Though God doth afflict, yet he never ceaseth to love or care for his people. *Elihu* was much upon that, industriously to remove the

the scandal of the crosse, which 'tis like then did and still doth offend many, and causeth them to stumble, when they see the righteous afflicted; therefore he would assure us, that God never withdraweth his eye from them: but his care of, and pity to, yea pleasure in them is everlasting. That eye of his which carries all this in it, is never shut towards them. The Lord saith of the Church, (*Isa. 49. 16.*) *Thy walls are continually before me.* As the walls of *Sion*, so the walls of every righteous person in *Zion*, or of every true Sionist, are continually before the Lord, *he withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous; He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep,* (*Psal. 121. 4.*) he that neither slumbers nor sleeps, needs not withdraw his eyes from us, and he that hath a tender regard to us, will not. The Prophet (*Isa. 27. 3.*) speaking of the Church under the Allegory of a Vineyard, brings in the Lord giving this assurance, *I will water it every moment, I will keep it night and day.* He that waters a Vineyard every moment, never withdraws his eyes from it; now by watering is meant the supply of whatsoever good the Vineyard or Church of God stood in need of; to be so supplied is to be well watered. The providence of God, as to our spirituall and temporall estate, watcheth over us continually to water us.

But some may question here, Doth not the Lord withdraw his eyes from the righteous? are his eyes continually upon them? what then is the meaning of that Scripture, (*Psal. 44. 23.*) and of several others of like importance; *Awake Lord, why sleepest thou?* That was at once the voyce of the Church, and her complaint; surely the Lords eyes were withdrawn from the Church when he was asleep. I answer, The Lord sleeps, with respect to his Church, as the Church sleeps with respect to the Lord, (*Cant. 5. 2.*) *I sleep* (saith the Spouse) *but my heart waketh.* Indeed the Lord doth act sometimes so towards the righteous, or lets things go so with the righteous, as if he were asleep, as if he took no notice of them, yet still his heart waketh towards them: So that his sleeping doth not imply an intermission of his care, but only a suspension of the effects of his care. For while the Lord lets things go so as if he were asleep, he then wakes and watches as much over the righteous, over his Church and people, as at any other time, when they have the highest actings of his providence for their outward peace and preservation.

And

Non solum Sagacem attentionemq; curam denotat hæc phrasis, sed perseverantem, continuum minimeq; desistentem. Bold:

*Famulos suos
nunc in gū, re-
spicit, nam jam
previdet, quid
eis miserecor-
diter recompen-
set. Greg: in
loc:*

And if that other sort of Scriptures should be objected against his perpetual watching over the righteous, or that he never withdraws his eyes, which say, *he hideth his face*, and turns himself away from them. I answer, Those Scriptures are all of them to be understood according to the former interpretation, the Lord hideth himself, as to sense and present appearance, but he never hideth himself, as to the real continuance of his love and care towards his Church or People. This Objection some made to one of the Ancients; the Lord (said they) may seem to withdraw his eyes from the righteous, because he suffers them to fall under the oppression of the unrighteous. No, saith he, *The Lord beholds the righteous, though they perish by the hand of the unrighteous; yea, when it is worst with them, the Lords Eye is upon them for good, both to see how they carry it, or behave themselves in their sufferings, and likewise to provide a full reward and recompence for them after all their sufferings.*

Before I pass from this part of the verse, let me make these two Inferences.

First, *If the Lord never withdraweth his Eyes from the righteous, then let the righteous know their own Priviledge and Mercy. How happy are they upon whom the Eyes of the Lord abide alwayes for good!* The Lord cannot endure to have good men out of his Eye, as Parents say of their darlings, and Princes of their Favourites. If we were assured, that the Eye of a great man, who loveth us, were alwayes upon us, if he should promise to have an eye to us, (That's an ordinary Promise among men, *I will have an Eye to you*, that is, I will take care of you; if we have (I say) but such a word from a man in Power) we think we have got a great revenue; *such a great Lord will have an eye to us, we have his word, he will not take off his care from us.* How much then should we boast and rejoyce in spirit, that the Lord hath said, *I will alwayes have a care of you, I will never withdraw mine eyes from you, I will never leave you, nor forsake you* (Heb. 13.5.) As it will be the eternal happiness of Believers in Glory, alwayes to behold, or see God, *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*; they have some sight of him here in a Glasse, but they shall see him face to face; that is, they shall see him clearly, as clearly as the creature is capable of seeing or enjoying him; now (I say) as it is the happiness of the Saints in Heaven alwayes to behold God, so it is the

the happiness of Saints here on earth, that the Lord doth alwayes behold them, that his eye is never withdrawn from them.

Consider therefore, you that are in a righteous state, whose acts and words, and walkings, are also righteous, consider your Priviledge, consider what it is to have the Lord Jesus alwayes setting his eye upon you, to have the Lords directing and countelling eye alwayes upon you, to have the Lords pitying and compassionating eye alwayes upon you, to have the Lords providing and caring eye alwayes upon you, to have the Lords delighting and well-pleased eye alwayes upon you; to have the eyes of the Lord thus upon you, and to have them alwayes upon you, what can ye desire more! Thus 'tis promised, (*2 Chron. 16. 9.*) *The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them, whose heart is perfect with him.* And whose hearts are perfect with him, but the hearts of the righteous? this is their priviledge. Jesus Christ (*Zech. 3. 9.*) is called, *The stone*, and saith the Text, *upon one stone shall be seven eyes.* There are two interpretations given of that Prophecie; First, thus, *upon one stone shall be seven eyes*, that is, the eyes of all men shall be upon that stone, upon Christ. Seven is a perfect definite Number, put for all numbers; the eyes of all shall be upon the stone, upon Christ; although he be to the wicked, or to them *that believe not, a stumbling stone, and a rock of offence*, (*1 Pet. 2. 8.*) yet to them that believe he is a most precious stone; and as they are alwayes beholding the beauty of that precious stone, so Jesus Christ doth indeed invite all eyes to behold him (*Isa. 65. 1.*) *Behold me, behold me*; he would have us take off our eyes from all others, and look steddily on him. Let all eyes be upon the stone; that's a good interpretation. There is a second, which suits the present poynt I am upon fully; *Seven eyes shall be upon one stone*; that is, the eyes of God shall be upon Jesus Christ. This is a promise made unto him as Mediator, when he came in the flesh, or in our nature, to do that great work for us; *Then*, saith the Prophet, *upon one stone shall be seven eyes*; which seven eyes note the perfect knowledge of God, and so the perfect care that God would have of Christ, to bear him up through that work of our Redemption: *Upon one stone shall be seven eyes*; I will take care of him, I will provide for him, and I will delight in him. As Jesus Christ is all eye, and Jesus Christ doth enlighten all eyes, that is, all that see,

are enlightened by Jesus Christ; so the eyes of God, the eyes of the Father were alwayes upon him, in favour, in love, in care, when he was here in this world about that great work of our salvation, and he had abundant experience of the eyes of his Father upon him. Now, mark it, this was the great promise made to Christ, the Stone, that upon him should be seven eyes, the eyes of the Lord should be alway and fully upon him. *And this is the privilege of every one that hath part and interest in this Stone Jesus Christ, every righteous person hath seven eyes upon him, the Lord God beholds him exactly, perfectly, and alwayes; He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous.*

A second inference is this; If the Lord never withdraweth his eyes from the righteous, *Then let the righteous know their duty: What's that? Never to withdraw their eyes from the Lord.* There is a threefold eye which a righteous man should never withdraw from God. First, An eye of faith: Secondly, An eye of hope: Thirdly, An eye of dependance: and that, First, for direction in all his wayes; Secondly, for protection in all his dangers. *I will lift up mine eyes* (saith David, *Psal. 121: 1.*) *unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.* And again, (*Psal. 123. 1, 2.*) *Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens. Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their Masters, and as the eyes of a mayden unto the hand of her Mistress, so our eyes waite upon the Lord our God, untill he have mercy on us; that is, we never withdraw our eyes from him, while we have need of his mercy, and that is alwayes.* *Walk before me,* that is, with an eye of faith, hope, and dependance, was the Lords charge to the father of the faithfull, (*Gen. 17. 1.*) *I have set the Lord alwayes before me,* that is, I keep a constant eye upon the Lord, was the profession of David, as the type of Christ, (*Psal. 16. 8.*) And as to keep an eye on God is best and safest for us, so it is extremely pleasing and contentfull to Christ, as he tells the Church, (*Cant. 9. 9.*) *Thou hast ravished my heart, my Sister, my Spouse, thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes,* that is, with a believing, a hoping, a depending look on me for all that good which thou wantest and wouldst have, or with a delighting look on me as thy chiefest good. *Let not the righteous withdraw their eyes from God, for he withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous.*

But

But (which is yet more) with Kings are they on the Throne.

These words fully clear up the sense, which I have given of that negative promise, *he withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous*, namely, that the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous for good. His is not a bare beholding of them, favours flow from his eyes. When *the eyes of God are upon the righteous*, they find the sweet and benefit of it. In the former verse *Elihu* said, God will give the poor right, here he saith more, he will give the poor, the righteous poor, a reward, and that no small one, *With Kings are they on the Throne.*

The Latine translation reads this part of the verse, not of the righteous poor, but of righteous Kings; *He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous*, and he placeth Kings upon the Throne for ever. That's a truth, the Lord placeth Kings upon their Thrones, and establisheth them there; but that is not the meaning or truth of this place; nor will the Hebrew (with any tolerable convenience) bear such a translation.

*Et reges in sa-
lio collocat in
perpetuum.
Vulg.*

Secondly, There are others, who, a little mistaking the word which we translate *Kings*, render it *Angels*; *They are with Angels on the Throne.* There is but very little difference in the Hebrew between those two words that signifie *Kings* and *Angels*, (the former is *Melachim*, the latter *Maleachim*) which hath given occasion for this reading, *He placeth them with Angels on the Throne*; and so the words are interpreted of the glorious exaltation of the righteous in Heaven, (when indeed they shall be like *Angels*, Angels Fellows, (*Mat. 22. 30.*) and walk hand in hand with Angels.) *Mr Broughton* though he translate (*with Kings*) yet seems to carry it in that sense, giving his glosse in the Margin, thus; *They shall be made fit for light with the living, with the Angels of God, his servants, in their degree, and be placed for ever in honour, and be high in honour and dignity; so ye shall sit upon twelve Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of Israel.* But this Text will not serve that purpose neither; and therefore I shall take it plainly as we render it, *They shall be with Kings upon the Throne.* There is a two-fold interpretation of the words according to this translation.

*Quasi
מלאכים
scribentur pro
מלכים
Merc:*

First, The Lord will exalt the righteous to great dignity, they shall be like Kings and Princes in this world, or they shall

*Cum regibus
tatum valet,
ac sicut reges.
Bold:*

*וְהָיוּ כְּמַלְכִּים
עִמָּם; וְנִמְנָגוּ
בֵּם*

ut autem
in passim fit in
hoc libro.
Merci:

¶ *Articulus*
accusativi ca-
sus quem verba
transitiva sive
activa regunt;
accipitur tamen
non raro pro à
ex, de, & cum
prepositioni-
bus. Drus. Ob-
fer: sacrae l. 9.
c. 7.

be in great favour with Kings, even Kings Favourites.

Secondly, *They shall be with Kings upon the Throne*, that is, they themselves shall be Kings. The Hebrew strictly read, is, *and Kings on the Throne*; they shall not only be like Kings, but they themselves shall be Kings, *and sit upon Thrones*: either of these interpretations reach the scope of *Elihu* fully. As if he had said, The righteous shall be greatly advanced or exalted by Kings, whose privilege it is to sit on Thrones, or *they shall be Kings upon the Throne*. Some experiences and examples have confirmed this. The Lord hath not only given righteous persons great advancement, and great favour with Kings, who sit on Thrones, but hath even advanced them to Kingly dignity; and given them Thrones to sit upon.

A Throne is a Seat Royal, the Seat of Majesty; A Throne is a seat exalted above other seats, as the person sitting upon it is exalted above other persons. *Solomon made him a great Throne of Ivory, and the Throne had six steps*, (1 Kings 10. 18.) God is represented sitting upon a Throne, and there receiving honour from all that were before him, (Rev. 4. 2, 9.) The whole Heaven is called the *Throne of God*, and the earth his footstool, (Isa. 66. 1.) because as Heaven is high above all, so there are the fullest manifestations of the greatness and glory of God. And because Thrones bore power and dignity, therefore the *Angels* (who among all meer creatures excell in power and dignity,) are called *Thrones*, (Col. 1. 16.) So then, *to be with Kings on the Throne*, that is, to be near them, and much accepted by them, is a very great honour; and that is the least here intended. But to be Kings on the Throne, is the greatest worldly honour; and possibly so much is here intended the righteous, while *Elihu* saith, *But with Kings are they upon the Throne*.

In that the righteous are said here to be *with Kings upon the Throne*, we learn,

Righteous persons are in high esteem with God:

He would not thus, in love, set them high, if he did not highly esteem them; he would not thus prefer them, if he did not know their worth. The world usually judges righteous persons, as if they were fit only for the dunghill, as if they were the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things, (1 Cor. 4. 13.) but God
hath

hath another opinion of them, he thinks them fit to ſerve Princes, and to be near the Throne. Take heed of judging them unworthy to be at the footſtool, whom God thinks worthy to be with Kings on the Throne.

Secondly, Note;

God hath exalted, and will exalt righteous perſons.

Whom he highly eſteems, he ſometimes advanceth highly in this world, they ſhall be with Kings on the Throne, (*Pſal. 107. 40, 41.*) *He purreth contempt upon Printes*, that is, upon unrighteous Princes; yet (as it followeth) *He ſetteth the poor on high from affliction*, ſo we tranſlate and put in the Margin, *He ſetteth the poor on high after affliction*. He afflicts the righteous to purge them, and ſo to prepare and fit them for greateſt enjoyments. We have a like affirmation, (*Pſal. 113. 7, 8.*) *He raiſeth up the poor out of the duſt, and liſterh up the needy out of the dunghill, that he may ſet them with Princes, even the Princes of his people.* Thus ſpake *Hannah* in her Song, (*1 Sam. 2. 8.*) and thus, in effect, ſpake the bleſſed Virgin in hers, (*Luke 1. 52.*) *He hath brought down the mighty from their ſeats, and hath exalted the lowly and meek.* We have ſome Scripture-inſtances of ſuch exaltations. *Joſeph*, a righteous perſon, was caſt into bonds, yet God ſets him, not only at liberty, but on high, he was with the King on the Throne, *Only in the Throne*, (ſaid *Pharaoh*, *Gen. 41. 40.*) *will I be greater than thou*; and all were commanded to bow the knee to him. *David*, a righteous perſon, followed the *Eſſes* great with young, and the Lord ſet him upon the Throne, upon the Throne of *Iſrael*. *Valentinian* was committed to priſon by the command of *Julian* the Apoſtate, becauſe he ſtruck an Idolatrous Prieſt, that would have ſprinkled him (*aqua laſtrali*) with their unholy holy water, as he ſtood in the gate of the Temple, where *Julian* was ſacrificing to his Idol-gods; yet he eſcaped that danger, and afterwards aſcended the Throne of that Great Empire. The Lord knows both how to deliver the righteous out of trouble, and to bring them to honour.

Laſtly, We may hence infer, *If the righteous are with Kings on the Throne, then righteouſneſs hath a reward. Them that honour me* (ſaith the Lord, *1 Sam. 2. 30.*) *I will honour*. It is no vaine thing to ſerve the Lord; to be righteous, and to do righteouſly,

ously, cannot but issue well. The Lord hath all promotions at his dispose, (*Psal. 75. 6, 7.*) And therefore he saith, *Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings,* (*Isa. 3. 10.*) *With Kings are they on the Throne.*

Yet, let me add, by way of Caution, that neither this Text, nor the notes given from it, are so to be understood, as if all righteous persons might hence expect great advancements in this world, or to be the special Favourites of Kings and Princes: The word of God doth not feed such humours, but mortifies them; nor doth it cherish any such aspiring expectations in righteous men, but teaches them quiet submission in their own private stations and callings, to those who are upon the Throne. So that while *Elihu* saith of the righteous, *With Kings are they on the Throne;* his meaning must be taken soberly, and may be taken distinctly, thus;

First, That God hath great respect to, and high favours for righteous men.

Secondly, That he brings some of them (as it is said of *Daniel* with the Prince of the Eunuchs, *Chap. 1. 9.*) *into favour and tender love with Kings and Princes.*

Thirdly, That the Lord hath often advanced righteous persons to Thrones and Kingly Dignities. And when ever the Lord advanceth any of the righteous, he makes good this promise, because in the exaltation of one, the faith and piety of all righteous persons, or the whole kind of them, is honoured and exalted.

*Etiam si id externe non fiat
semper, tamen
omnium fides
Et pietas quorundam piorum
exaltatione honoratur. Coc.*

Fourthly, To be sure, all the righteous shall be with Kings on the Throne hereafter. Christ hath purchased, and is gone to prepare a Kingdome for the righteous, and will give them a better Crown, than any this world affords, an incorruptible one. As now the righteous are spiritual Kings, or Kings in a spiritual sense, (*Rev. 1. 6.*) that is, they rule over and keep in subjection, their own lusts and corruptions, pride, ambition, love of the world, wrath, envy, and whatever else in them doth rebell and exalt it self against the knowledge of God; yea, they as Kings (in this world) conquer the world by faith, (*1 Job. 5. 4.*) and the Prince of this world, the devil, through the power of Jesus Christ (as I say all the righteous are now spiritual Kings (in the sense given) through grace here on earth, so they shall be glorious Kings and reigne with Christ for ever in Heaven; and then shall this word

of

of God by *Elihu*, be fulfilled to the utmost, *With Kings are they upon the Throne,*

Yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted.

Elihu proceeds to shew the happiness of the righteous yet further; The Lord doth not only advance them, but establish them; nor doth he only establish them for a while, but even perpetu-
 ateth their establishment, *He establisheth them for ever.* The word אֲרָאָה *ar-
dice* שֵׁב *se-
dere, Ex in hac
conjugatione,
sedere fecit.*
 is, *He makes them sit.* We render fully to the sense, *He establish-
 eth them.* The Lord sets them up on high, and then settles them
 on high. Some get on high, but they cannot keep on high, they
 find no establishment there; but God can establish them

For ever.

The *for ever* of this world is a long time. The Lord saith of
 Sion, (*Psal. 132. 14.*) *Here will I dwell for ever*, that is, long.
 Thus in the text, *He will establish them for ever*, that is, they shall
 have long establishment. And if we take it as to their exaltation in
 the other world, there God will establish them to the utmost la-
 titude of *for ever*, that is, to eternity. The Septuagint translate, ἐν νίκῃς *in
He will establish them to victory.* The same word in the Hebrew, victoria.
 signifies *eternity*, and also *victory*, because eternity overcomes
 and triumphs over all: The Lord shall settle them to victory; and Sept:
Sic 2 Sam. 2.
26.
μὴ ἐν νίκῃς
κατασφραγίσῃ
ἐν νίκῃς.
 that may have a good interpretation, with respect to the power of
 God in settling them; *He shall settle them to victory*, that is, they
 shall (in his power) overcome all difficulties that stand in the
 way of their establishment.

Hence Note;

As preferment, so establishment is from God.

First, He establisheth all things, whether they be, First, natu-
 ral things, the heavens and the earth, times and seasons, (*Gen. 8.
 22.*) or Secondly, Civil things, States and Nations; or Thirdly,
 Spiritual things; First, the Gospel, and the Church of the Gospel,
 that he establisheth as a Rock, against which the gates of hell
 shall not prevaile, (*Mat. 16. 18. so Isa. 44. 28. Psal. 87. 5.*)
 Secondly, Grace in the hearts of his people, (*1 Pet. 5. 10.*)
 and them in the wayes of grace, (*2 Thes. 2. 17. Chap. 3. 3.*)
 Thus God establisheth all things.

Secondly,

Secondly, He establisheth, counsels and actions, (*Isa. 44. 26.*) He confirmeth the word of his servants, and performeth the counsel of his Messengers; that is, he makes good, and brings to effect that word which they have given in counsel. And as for actions, *Moses prayeth (Psal. 90. 17.) Establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea the work of our hands establish thou it.* Whatever is in our hands quickly molders away, and (as the enemies said when the *Jewes* built the walls of *Jerusalem*, *Neh. 4. 3.*) *If a Fox go up upon it, it will fall, unless the Lord establish it;* but neither the Foxes with their subtilty, nor the Lyons with their power and cruelty, shall be able to overthrow that wall, or those actions, which the Lord is pleased to establish; for he doth establish them

For ever.

Hence Note;

The Lord can establish, not only for a time, but for alwayes; he can give a perpetuity of establishment, not only a lasting, but an everlasting establishment; he can give an eternity of establishment.

Here is compleat happiness: What can we desire more, than First, to be in a great and good estate; Secondly, to be established there; Thirdly, to be established for ever? They that are set high are set in slippery places, unless the Lord be with them; how much more if the Lord be against them? (*Psal. 73. 18.*) But the Lord can set us as high as the highest Rock, and yet make us as firme as the firmest Rock. *He doth establish them for ever,*

And they are exalted.

Some read thus, *He establisheth them for ever, when they are exalted,* which makes a very clear sense; when they are got high, the Lord doth establish them fully and finally. We render it as a distinct act of God, *They are established for ever, and they are exalted;* probably intending thus much; that the Lord when he will do a thing, can do it, notwithstanding all opposition, that either is or can be made against it: he sets them with Kings on the Throne, and doth establish them for ever, yea, they rise in power and dignity more and more, *They are exalted.*

Hence

Hence Note ;

What God will do, shall be done ;

If he saith to a person, be exalted, he shall be exalted ; if he saith to *Jerusalem*, thou shalt be built, and to the Temple, thy foundation shall be laid, (*Isa. 44. 28.*) it is done ; if he saith, pull down *Babylon*, down it must come, even to the very foundation. *Ephraim* said, (*Jer. 30. 18.*) *Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised ;* I found the effects of thy chastisement, it came home to me. What God will work, no man can lett or put a stop to.

Further, From the other reading, Note ;

Whom God sets up, no man can pull down, till himself pleaseth ;

He doth establish them for ever, when they are exalted. God is able to maintain his own acts, whether in casting any down, or exalting them. When God laid the mountains and heritage of *E-sau* waste for the Dragons of the Wilderness, (*Mt. 1. 3.*) *Edom* said at the next verse, (well, I see) *we are impoverished, but we will return, and build the desolate places.* As if *Edom* had said, Though the Lord hath brought us thus low, yet we doubt not to recover our former glory. But what saith the Lord ? hear what in the next line ; *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, They shall build, (or let them build) but I will throw down.* Now (I say) as when the Lord pulls down, none can build without his leave, so whom the Lord exalteth, none can pull down ; *He establisheth them for ever, when they are exalted.* Thus *Elihu* sets forth the exceeding kindness of God to, and his care over the righteous, not only his provident care as to their present condition, but as to the abiding of their exaltation and the establishment of it for ever.

JOB, Chap. 36. Vers. 8, 9, 10.

8. *And if they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction:*

9. *Then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions, that they have exceeded:*

10. *He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.*

These three verses hold forth three things in particular, all which concern the righteous, of whom *Elihu* said in the former verse, not only, that *God doth not withdraw his eyes from them*, but establisheth them on high, or advanceth them highly in this world.

First, That possibly they may be cast into sore afflictions, even after their exaltation, & the newly promised lastingness of it, (v. 8.)

Secondly, That the procuring cause of these afflictions, is their own sin; for we find mention of their transgression in the 9th verse, and of their iniquity in the tenth.

Thirdly, That the purpose and designe of God towards them, when they have brought themselves into streights, & are cast into an afflicted condition, is very gracious, and tends to their everlasting good. And this designe is three-fold.

First, To discover their sin to them; that's laid down at the 9th verse, *Then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions.*

Secondly, To prepare them for a better receiving of faithful counsel and instruction, at the 10th verse, *He openeth also their ear to discipline.*

Thirdly, To bring them quite off from their sin; that's expressed in the close of the 10th verse, *and commandeth that they return from iniquity.* These are the parts, this the purpose of the Context under hand;

Vers. 8. *And if they be bound in fetters.*

There is some question who are to be understood as the Antecedent to this, *they, if they*, who are they? Some, because the words

words following speak of *transgression* and *iniquity*, conceive, that surely it must be meant of wicked men, or of the ungodly; but *Elihu* comes not upon that subject til the 13th verse; there he turns his speech to such, *but the hypocrites in heart heape up wrath, &c.* Therefore here he doth not speak of, or to, wicked, but righteous men, falling into trouble and affliction; *they*, that is, *the righteous, &c.*

Again, Taking righteous men to be the Antecedent (as the text plainly carries it) yet there is a difference in opinion, whether we are to understand *Elihu* speaking of righteous men in that special dignity described at the 7th verse, such as are *with Kings on the Throne*, or of righteous men in general: I conceive we may understand the text of either. And therefore,

First, When *Elihu* saith, *If they be bound in fetters*, he may intend those righteous men who were so highly exalted in the former verse, such a change may come upon them; even they who were *with Kings on the Throne*, may come to be *bound in fetters, and holden in the cords of affliction*.

Secondly, He may intend it of righteous men in any other condition; for *Elihu* having shewed how graciously God dealeth in exalting some righteous men, sheweth that God is gracious also unto those that are not exalted; even unto those that are greatly afflicted, and brought very low. Briefly, as in the former verse he spake of righteous men lifted up, so here of righteous men cast down: As if he had said, *If any of the righteous are at any time so far from being exalted with Kings on the Throne, that they are cast upon the dunghill, and are brought into great streights, yet it is not because God takes no care of them, or because he hath cast them out of his favour; but it is thus with righteous men for many blessed ends and purposes, which God hath upon them, or towards them, to shew them their sin, to fit them for instruction, and to bring them off from their iniquity.* Thus the words prevent an objection; for *Elihu* having said, *he withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous, but with Kings are they on the Throne*, some might say, You can shew us very few such sights, you can shew us few righteous men with Kings on the Throne, or exalted highly in this world; and we can shew you many righteous men in great trouble, in fetters and cords of affliction. Well, saith *Elihu*, suppose it be so, suppose you find many righteous men in such a low condition,

yet God withdraweth not his eyes from them, no not then ; yea, he is doing them good by all the evils that they suffer. So then, if this relative *they* referre to righteous men in either capacity, either to such as were before exalted, and are now afflicted, or to such righteous men as were never so exalted, yea as are depressed and cast into an afflicted condition, yet God withdraweth not his eyes from them, but still continues his care of them, and tenderness towards them.

If they be bound in fetters, and holden by the cords of affliction.

Here are two hard words, *bound* and *holden*, bound as captives, bound as prisoners, *bound* in fetters, yea, and *holden* in cords, *holden* or *caught* as a poor bird in a net or snare, or as a wild beast in a toyle. *Bound in fetters, and holden in cords.* These *fetters* and *cords* may be understood two wayes.

First, Literally and properly, it is possible for a righteous man to be bound in fetters, and holden in cords, plainly so called. *Joseph* was cast into prison, and the *Iron entred into his soul*, and his feet were hurt in the Stocks, in material Stocks.

Secondly, We may expound these *fetters* and *cords* figuratively, or metaphorically, and so any trouble or streight is as a fetter, and as a cord: Thus to be *bound in fetters*, and *holden in cords*, is but an expression signifying any afflicted condition. *Fetters and cords are Emblems of slavery & captivity.* The Prophet foreshewing the willing contribution of divers strange Nations towards the help of the *Jewes* in their return from the Babylonish captivity, as also, beyond that, their subjection to Christ and the power of the Gospel, gives it under this shadow, (*Isa. 45. 14.*) *Thou saith the Lord, the labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia, and of the Sabeans, men of stature shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine,* (that is, they shall yeild themselves to thee as thy subjects, and more) *they shall come after thee in chaines, they shall come over;* that is, they shall follow thee as captives do a conquering enemy, in chaines. In what chaines? the meaning is not, that they shall come with chaines of Iron upon their bodies; but even the stoutest, greatest, & richest of them shall humbly submit, they shall come even as prisoners, with their chaines about them, supplicating and intreating thy favour. We read in the holy History of the Kings, that the servants of *Benhadad* came with ropes about their necks

necks to *Ahab*, they came with material ropes about their necks in token of their abatement and readiness to submit unto what sentence soever the King of *Israel* should lay upon them. To come with ropes and chains, is, in Scripture Language, to come in deepest humiliation; and *to be bound in chaines and fetters*, is to be in greatest affliction. That's the sense of the Prophet (*Isa. 28. 22.*) *Now therefore be ye not mockers* (there were some that derided him, threatening judgement in the name of the Lord, take heed of that) *lest your bands be made strong*; that is, lest God bring you into such great afflictions, that you shall find and feel your selves (as it were) in bands, or (as *Elihu* expresseth it in the Text) *bound in fetters, and holden in the cords of affliction*. So then, this notes in general any state of trouble or sorrow, of misery or calamity that befalls us here below, (*Psal. 107. 10.*) *They that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron*; that is, as fast bound in affliction, as if they were bound in iron. Thus here

Holden in cords of affliction.

Some translate, *cords of poverty*; the same word signifying both affliction & poverty, because poverty is so great an affliction. Here's the case, this is the condition into which *Elihu* supposeth righteous men may fall; *They may be bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction*. Taking the words as they refer to righteous men in general, observe,

The best of men may fall into the worst outward condition;

They may be in a condition of captivity, they may be in reall fetters and cords, or they may be in a state of affliction, as bad to them as fetters and cords. I have heretofore, more than once, spoken of the afflictions of the righteous in the opening of this Book, therefore I shall not stay upon it here. Only take notice that the righteous may come into fetters, &c. not only for tryall of their graces, but for the punishment of their iniquities; they possibly have not kept close to the bands of duty, and therefore God brings them into the bands of calamity. As wicked men say in the pride and stoutness of their hearts, (*Psal. 2. 3.*) *Come, let us break their bands, and cast their cords from us*; that is, those bands of duty and cords of obedience which the Gospel layeth upon them; So,

*Vincula sunt
servitutis Sym-
bola.*

כַּל טַוּוּ
Funibus pau-
perum. Vulg:
כַּל Dicitur
quicquid premit
& constringit;
quare appella-
tione Funis
comprehendi-
tur pignus, quo
obligatur ho-
mo, & dolor
praesentis par-
turientium.

in a degree, good men, righteous men, may throw off the cords of obedience, and the bands of duty, through the violence of corruption and temptation, walking loosely & vainly for a season, they may break the bands of the Gospel Covenant, and the cords of the Commandement, and when they do so, God will not spare them, but will throw them even into the bands of trouble and into the cords of affliction; they shall know the fetters and bands of affliction, threatened in the Law, when they have not carefully kept to the rule of the Law.

Secondly, Taking the righteous in that special capacity, for such as were once exalted, and in high place, or as 'tis said in the former verse, *With Kings on the Throne*, and finding them here in fetters and bands, Note,

The worldly state of good, of righteous men, as well as others, is subject to change.

For though that text saith, *He establisheth them*, yet it is not to be understood that God doth so establish righteous men in their places, that they can never be put out of them, or so exalt them, that they shall never be pulled down; that text sheweth what God can do, he can exalt them so, that they shall not be removed for ever, and he often exalts them so, but he doth not so alwayes; for the outward estates of good men may have as great changes, as the outward estate of wicked men have: they may come from thrones to prisons, and from chains of gold to fetters of Iron. There have been many such changes as to the things of the world, even to those that are not of the world; And as Heathen Princes and Kings have often found such changes, so also did several of the Kings of Judah, they were brought from the throne to the prison. *Zedekiah* and *Jeckoniah* and *Manasseh*, had such sad changes; when they highly provoked God, they came from their Thrones to the prison, from a Crown to the cords of affliction; yea this hath been the lot of many other righteous men exalted, they have been brought to the prison, and laid very low in this world. *Solomon* saith of one, (*Eccles. 4. 14.*) *Out of prison he cometh to reigne*, and of another he saith in the same verse, *He also that is borne in his Kingdome becometh poor*; such vicissitudes and revolutions come over the heads of the children of men, yea good men are not exempted from such changes and revolutions. Therefore be

not

not offended if at any time you see good men in chaines and fetters, in a condition of great affliction.

Thirdly, From the manner of expression, *When they are bound in fetters, and holden in cords.* Affliction is set forth and described by cords and fetters.

Hence note ;

Afflictions are grievous to the flesh.

Are not fetters so ? are not cords so ? The word here translated *cords*, is several times in Scripture applyed to signifie the pains of a woman in travel ; those are most dolorous paines ; such are some afflictions. The Apostle speaking of affliction in generall, (*Heb. 12. 11.*) saith, *No chastning for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous.* 'Tis no easie thing to be in fetters and cords, to be bound in chaines. Afflictions streighten, and press, pinch & gall like fetters, they burthen the flesh, they are no light matters. Though the Apostle, comparatively to the weight of glory, calleth the heaviest outward afflictions *light*, (*2 Cor. 4. 17.*) yet first, in themselves ; and secondly, to our flesh, they are very heavy. Therefore we should pity those that are in affliction, as those that are in fetters and cords, and we should pray for those that are in affliction, as for those that are bound. Every affliction is a kind of captivity : *If they be bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction* ; thus it may be with the righteous. But is not this an argument that God hates them ? surely no ; we read the mind of God towards them notwithstanding this in the next verse.

Vers. 9. *Then he sheweth them their work ;*

That is, when they are in cords and fetters. But did he never shew them their work before ? yes, doubtless he did ; but then especially and effectually, then he sheweth, he declareth, he makes manifest to them, or he causeth them to see and know their work. The word in that conjugation signifieth, not barely to *shew*, but to make them *see, understand and consider* their work ; he brings them to a review of what they have done, and to see that they have done amiss. *Then he sheweth* ; it is a shewing with power, an *efficacious shewing*, *he sheweth them their work*. What work ? this their work may be considered two wayes.

First, As to the matter of it, what they had done. Till we see
what

what we have done, we repent not of what we have done, how much soever it ought to be repented of; as the Lord complained of Israel by the Prophet (Jer. 8. 6.) *No man repented of his wickednesse, saying, What have I done?*

Secondly, As to the vitiouſnesse or ſalseneſſe of it, *He ſheweth them their work*, that is, either what they had done which was evil in the matter of it, or what they had done in an evil manner, though in it ſelf good; he ſheweth them the evil of their work, the irregularity, the crookedneſſe, and ſintulneſſe of their work. That this is the meaning, appeareth plainly in the words that follow, *Then he ſheweth them their work, and their transgreſſion*; that is, that there is ſome transgreſſion or fault, poſſibly many faults and transgreſſions, in their work. *Then he ſheweth them their work.*

Hence Note,

Fiſt, *Sin is properly the work of man*;

That is, of the fleſh in man (Gal. 5. 19.) *The works of the fleſh are manifeſt, which are theſe, Adultery, &c.* Good is Gods work in us, evil is our work againſt the mind of God. Sin is often called the work of our hands, (Pſal. 28. 4.) *Give them after the work of their hands, render to them their deſert*; that is, what they have deſerved by their ſins. Moſes declared his fear and holy jealousie concerning the children of Israel in this Language, (Deut. 31. 29.) *I know that after my departure, ye will utterly corrupt your ſelves, becauſe ye will do evil in the ſight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger by the work of your hands.* Idolatry is ſpecially called the work of mans hands, becauſe Idolaters either worſhip that as a god, or God by that, which their hands have wrought (Rev. 9. 20.) *They repented not of the works of their hands, that they ſhould not worſhip Devils, and Idols of Gold, and Silver, and Braſſe, &c.* Yet Idolatry is much more the work of the heart, than of the hand. And as Idolatry, ſo any other ſin, whether of heart or tongue, may be called the work of our hand, it being that which is moſt properly our work, though originally the Devils work. As to pardon ſin, is properly the work of God, ſo to commit ſin, is properly the work of man. There is no work ſo much ours, as that; no work properly ours, but bad work; all the good we do, is the work of God in us, or by us.

Secondly

Secondly, Note ;

Man doth not see the falseness and faultiness of his own work, till God sheweth it him.

There may be many cracks and flaws in our good works, which we perceive not; we are ready to think and say, *All's well*, we have done very well, until God lets us see our work in his light, in the light of his Word and Spirit ; and then we shall see cause to be humbled for those works which we were proud of, and sometimes boasted in. The Prophet (*Haggai* 1. 5.) called the Jews to *consider their ways* ; they saw their wayes, but they considered not their wayes, and therefore they saw not the evil and error of their wayes. As we see many of the works of God, yet see not the excellency or admirable contrivance of them, till himself sheweth it ; so we see many of our own works, yet we see not the sinfulness, vanity, and folly that is in them, till God shew it unto us ; *he maketh us see our work as it is.*

Thirdly, From the circumstance of time, when it is that the Lord sheweth unto man his work, the falseness of his work ; the Text saith, *Then he sheweth them their work*, that is, when they are bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction.

Hence Note ;

The badness or sinfulness of our works, is most usually, and most cleerly discovered to us in times of affliction ; then sheweth he them their work.

Josephs Brethren did a very ill work in selling him into Egypt, and in putting off their Father with a lye ; yet they took little notice of this work for many years ; but when they were bound in fetters, and holden in the cords of affliction, when they came down into Egypt for Corn, and were in great streights, through the policy of their Brother to discover them, not out of any design to hurt them, *Then they said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our Brother* (*Gen.* 42. 21.) And (*vers.* 22.) *Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child, and ye would not hear ? therefore behold also his blood is required :* Then their sin appeared to them in bloody colours, then that sinfulness of their work appeared to them, which they saw not before. *Affliction is a dark condition, yet it brings*

much light into the soul: Affliction brings light to discover our works of darkness, that is, the sinfulness of our works; troubles make Comments upon our works, afflictions expound our actions, and shew where the error of them is. We are usually very blind to see or discern a fault in our selves, or in what we have done, untill God openeth our eyes, by laying a crosse upon our backs; Then he sheweth them their work,

And their transgressions that they have exceeded.

Scelera eorum.
Vulg.

Nomen hoc
usurpatur etiam de levioribus vitiis.
Drus.

Here we see (as was toucht before) what kind of works they are which God sheweth them in affliction; works of transgression, or the transgression of their works. The Vulgar Latine renders the Text by a harder word, *Their wickednesses, or villanies.* Others by a word of no lesse, if not of a more hard and harsh signification, *He sheweth them their prevarication;* as if they had dealt cunningly and treacherously with God, not plainly, clearly, and above board, as if they had used tricks and policies very much unbecoming righteous persons. Most give it a more easie title (as we) translating by a word that will comply with any sin, *transgression;* every sin, the least sin is a transgression; *Sin is a transgression of the Law* in the very nature of it; and taking the word in this lowest, and most favourable notion,

Observe;

God will not spare, he will not spare the righteous for their transgressions, or lesser faults, if they do not judge and humble themselves;

If their sins be but slips, the Lord will make them know what they have done.

But there seemeth to be a great aggravation in the Text, upon these transgressions, which more than intimates that they are no small ones; for 'tis added, *And their transgressions,*

That they have exceeded.

Some read the words in the Present Tense, or time, *He sheweth them their transgressions, when they exceed or prevail:* As if the meaning were, God doth not suffer the sins of righteous persons to grow too potent and prevalent upon them, but takes them in time, and nips their sins in the bud, when he sees they begin to grow

grow strong upon them, least if let alone, they might be soyled by them, and so fall into open scandal, or be hardly with-drawn from them. It is no easie thing to master and mortifie a lust, when once it hath got head, and therefore it is a very gracious work of God, to shew a man his sin convincingly, and humble him for it, when he perceives it rising in strength. This is a pious sense and profitable. We read it in the past time,

when they have exceeded.

That is, when these righteous persons have exceeded much in their transgressions. As much as to say, when they have sinned exceedingly, or when their sins are many and great, when (according to the Hebrew) they are waxen mighty, then the Lord sees it high time to deal with them.

The word which we render *exceeded*, comes from a root that signifieth a *strong, or mighty man*, and in the Verb, *to act strongly and mightily*; as if *Elihu* had said, He sheweth them that they have sinned like Giants and mighty men, they have sinned greatly, grievously. And 'tis possible for those that are righteous in their state to sin greatly; not only to transgresse, but to exceed in their transgressions, *that they have exceeded.* יתגבר

Hence Note,

First, *There is an excessiveness, or an exceedingness in some sins.*

All men sin, but the sins of all men, at least all the sins of all good men, do not exceed; they are not all of a high stature, they are not all strong and *mighty sins*, as the Lord by his Prophet called those of *Israel* (*Amos 5. 12.*) We usually distinguish of sins; some are sins in the excess, and some in the defect; Prodigality is a sin in the excess, and Parcimony is a sin in the defect; Superstition is a sin in the excess, when men will worship God more than he requires, or in what he requires not; Prophaneness, or neglect of Worship, as also negligence in Worship, are sins in defect. Thus some sins are in the excess, others in the defect, yet every transgression hath a kind of excess in it, and some are exceedingly excessive. And because when any exceedingly exceed in sinning, their sins may be said to reign; therefore (I suppose) Mr. *Broughton* translates this Text so, *And that their trespasses reigned.* For, though as to a course of sin, it is incon-

ſiſtent with the ſtate of a righteous man, that ſin ſhould reigne in him, yet as to this or that act it may reigne; ſin may reigne over, and bring under a godly man by the violence of a preſent temptation, though it cannot reigne over him (as it doth over the wicked) by a willing ſubmiſſion. As the beſt ſin alwayes, ſo ſometimes they have ſinned greatly, they have exceeded. *David's* ſin exceeded, his ſin, as to that act, maſter'd and reigned over him. *Solomon's* ſin exceeded, when in his old age his wives turned away his heart to other gods, (1 Kings 11. 4.) And *Peter's* ſin exceeded, when he denied his Maſter. The righteous are not exempt from a particular reigne of ſin, though through grace, they are delivered from the reigne of any the leaſt particular ſin. As there is no kind, ſo no degree of ſin, but a godly man may fall into it, except that againſt the holy Ghoſt, and totall Apoſtacy from his profeſſion.

Secondly, God ſheweth them *that they have exceeded*, that's it which God ſheweth them in their affliction.

Hence obſerve;

Many ſee their ſin, that do not ſee the exceedingneſſe of their ſin, or that they have exceeded in ſin.

Not only natural and carnal men, who ſee that they have ſinned, do not at all ſee the exceedingneſſe of their ſin, but ſome good men ſee that they have ſinned, but ſee not preſently the exceeding; no nor half, the evil of their ſin; therefore, ſaith *Elihu*, He ſheweth them their tranſgreſſion, that they have exceeded. *Paul* before his converſion, knew that he had ſinned, but he knew not the ſinfulneſſe of his ſin, which yet afterwards was to him exceeding ſinfull, (Rom. 7. 13.) *As it is the height of our corruption to commit ſins exceeding ſinfull, ſo it is a very high poynt of grace, to ſee the exceeding ſinfulneſſe of our ſin.*

You will ſay, how is it that ſin doth exceed, or wherein conſiſts the exceedingneſſe of it? I anſwer,

Fiſt, There is an exceedingneſſe of ſin, in the ſtrength that it hath over us, when it doth eaſily command and prevaile, then we ſin exceedingly, or then ſin is exceeding ſinfull, it hath got a mighty hand over us. O how ſadly do the ſins of many exceed thus! they are held down by their corruptions as ſlaves and captives, they cannot get themſelves out from under the power of a baſe

luſt.

lust. As the devil leads some, so lusts and corruptions lead others captive at their will, they are at the beck and command of sin. Thus sin exceeds in the wicked, who either know not God, or who walk daily contrary to their knowledge.

Secondly, That man doth exceed in his transgression, or his transgression doth exceed, who sins with, or hath a very ill frame of heart in sinning. Many a good man falls into sin, and yet he hath not, as I may say, a base or wicked frame of heart in sinning, but his very sinning is, upon the matter, against his own heart, and the bent of his spirit, his heart goeth not with it. The more of the heart or will is mingled with any sin, the more exceeding sinfull it is. I may say of some men (I would not be mistaken) *That they do evil with a better frame of heart, than others do good; there are some that do good with very bad, yea with base hearts; The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination; how much more when he brings it with a wicked mind, or (as we put in the Margin) with wickedness, (Pro. 21. 27.)* that is, either for applause, to be seen of men, or for profit, to gain by men, or in malice, the better to compass revenge upon any man, or sort of men; under all which covers, wicked men have brought their sacrifices, that is, have appeared in the outward worship of God, or have taken up the form of godliness. And whosoever doth thus, hath a far worse frame of heart in doing good, than a good man hath in doing evil: who though he doth evil, yet he delights not in it, and closes not with it. By how much any mans heart is more taken with sin, by so much the more sinfull it is.

Thirdly, The exceedingness of a sin may be measured by the circumstances of sinning; then a man may be said to transgress, and exceed in transgression, when he sinneth, First, against light, against the checks of his own conscience within; as also, Secondly, when he sins against reproofs, warnings, and admonitions from without; that man exceeds in sin, who hath been told of it, and yet goeth on. Thirdly, that man exceeds in sin, who sins in the midst of much mercy, and daily received or renewed favours; as also he, Fourthly, who sins in the midst of many afflictions and judgements, whether upon his person and family, or upon the Nation where he liveth: such as these not only sin or transgress, but exceed in transgression. Now the Lord in times of affliction sheweth men these and the like exceedings of their transgression,
and

and causeth them to confess, not only that they are sinners, and have transgressed, but they are brought upon their knees to confess, that they have exceeded in transgression. And when this is done, the Lord goeth on yet further to perfect the work of humiliation and repentance, while they are *bound in fetters, and holden in the cords of affliction*; for then, as it followeth,

Vers. 10. *He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.*

Still 'tis Gods work, *he sheweth before*, and here, *he openeth*: as in the former verse he openeth their eyes to see, so in this he openeth their ear to hear.

He openeth their ear.

Revelavit occulta & abscondita: revelatio auris notat intimam insinuationem.

This latter is more than the former, this opening the *ear to discipline*, is more than a *shewing of sin*, and the exceeding sinfulness of it: Opening the ear, imports a close and home-discovery of a mans condition to him, (*Psal. 51. 6.*) David, after his great sin, perceived the Lord shewing him, or making him to understand wisdom secretly.

He openeth also their ear.

The word which we translate, *to open*, properly signifieth *to reveale*; and, in Scripture phrase, the ear is said to be *revealed*, or *uncovered*, when a secret is brought to us, (*1 Sam. 20. 2.*) Jonathan said to David, *God forbid, thou shalt not die; behold my father will do nothing, either great or small, but that he will shew it me, (or uncover my ear) and why should my father hide this thing from me?* Saul also used the same Hebraisme, or forme of speech, when he upbraided his servants with their unfaithfulness to him; What, saith he, hath the son of Jesse such preferments for you? and are you all so corrupted in your loyalty to me, *that all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that sheweth me, (or uncovereth my ear) that my son hath made a League with the son of Jesse, (Sams. 21. 8.)* Will none of you *uncover my ear*? that is, discover the plot that is contrived for my ruine? Then the ear is said to be opened or uncovered, when any secret is made known to the mind; as was further shewed at the 16th verse of the 33d Chapter, where *Elihu* used this expression; and therefore I shall

Lequitur de aure cordis & mentis. Scitum illud; Mens audit, mens vidit, cetera surda et caeca sunt. Drus.

not

not return to that matter, but referre the Reader thither. Only consider to what, or for what, the Lord is said to open the ear. In the 33^d Chapter *Elihu* told us, that when the eyes of men are shut (deep sleep being fallen upon them) *he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction.* Here *Elihu* saith, God having men under the rod, *openeth also their ear*

To discipline.

The Hebrew word is of the same extraction in both places ; *למסר*
Instruction is for discipline, and discipline tends unto instruction. *Ad castigatio-*
It is often rendred, *chastisement*, and generally signifies any sever- *nem, i. e. Ne ca-*
rer course of instruction or education, whereby we are drawn off *stigatio sit ei*
from evil and unto good. When *Elihu* saith, *He openeth their ear* *absq; frustra, vel*
to discipline, we may understand it two wayes. *ut ista discipli-*
na seu correctio-
ne emendentur.

First, To fit them for instruction, and counsel ; they heard (possibly) before, but not with an *open*, that is, a ready and obedient ear. The ear is shut, though we hear much, unless we submit and conforme to what we hear. The ear seldome opens fully till the Lord smites, as well as speaks, and gives us both a word and a blow.

Secondly, *He openeth their ear to discipline*, that is, to hearken what Gods chastening or correction speakes, or what he speaks by his chastning. The Lord would not have his chastnings unprofitable, nor his rods without fruit to us, and therefore *he openeth the ear to discipline*, and sheweth us the meaning of such a cross or sickness, of such a loss or affliction ; *He openeth their ear to discipline.*

Hence note ;

First, *It is a special power of God which helps us to understand his mind, either in his Word or in his Works.*

We neither understand the dealings nor sayings of God, if left to our selves : the heart of man is shut, his ear is deaf, the ear of his heart (that's the ear here intended) till God say (as in the Gospel to the bodily ear) *Ephatha, Be thou opened,* (*Pro. 20. 12.*) *The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord is the maker of them both :* That's a great truth ; First, of the sensitive ear and eye ; 'tis the Lord who hath made the one to hear, and the other to see, as he told *Moses* (*Exod. 4. 11.*) and as 'tis said, (*Psal. 94. 19.*)

Secondly,

Secondly, 'tis as true if understood of the intellectual eye and ear; the hearing ear and seeing eye, that is, the ear that heareth obediently and practically, that ear is of Gods forming and making; such an ear did God create (*Acts 16. 14.*) where it is said, *A certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple of the City of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things that were spoken by Paul.*

Further, what was the season of opening the ear? It was a day of affliction, when they were bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction.

Hence learn;

God useth afflictions as medicines or means to restore spiritual hearing.

Man is often cured of his spiritual deafness, both as to the voyce of the word and workes of God, by sickness. A good man in health, peace, & prosperity, may have his ears so stopped that the Lord sees it needful to send some sharp correction to get out the ear-wax and unlock them. *Prosperity* (saith one of the Ancients) *is the gift of God comforting us; adversity is the gift of God admonishing us; why then dost thou complain that thou sufferest, thy suffering is a medicament, not a punishment; 'tis for thy bettering, not for thy undoing.* 'Tis a favour to feel God striking, when we have not heard him speaking, and he therefore strikes that we may attend what he speaks; When words do not prevaile to open the ear, fetters and cords shall. That's the second designe of God when he brings the righteous into streights, *Then he openeth their ear to discipline:* The third is given in the close of this verse;

And commandeth that they return from iniquity.

Here's the issue of the former two: The shewing them their transgressions, the opening their ear, are that they may *return from iniquity*; and here is a command that they must; *And commandeth that they return,* &c. The Hebrew text may be rendered, *He speaketh, or saith, that they return from iniquity*; and this speaking may be expounded two wayes; First, *by perswading*; He speaks perswadingly. The Lords afflictions are perswasions, his stroaks are entreaties; he beseecheth us by our sorrows, and sicknesses, and weaknesses, and pains, that we would *return from*

ONT

Res prospera donum est dei consolanti, res adversa est donum dei admonenti; quod igitur pateris, unde plangis; medicina est, non pœna; castigatio non damnatio.
August. in Psal. 102.
Qui jubentis verba non audiunt, ferientis verberibus admonentur; ut ad bona eterna pœna trahant, quos pœna non invitant.
Greg. l. 26.
Moral. c. 26.
וְאַתָּא עֵי דִּי-

our iniquity. Secondly, we take speaking or saying in the highest straine, He speaks by commanding, he speaks authoritatively; Thus we render, *He commandeth*. The command of God is twofold; First, formal or expresse, when God gives the rule in so many words. Secondly, virtual. The command of God (I conceive) is here to be understood in this latter sense. When the Lord afflicteth the righteous, he virtually commands, or sends out his Edict, that they *return from their iniquity*. The word *return*, implies them formerly following some iniquity, & gone far from the Lord: This returning is repenting all the Scripture over. I need say no more of that. As by sin we turn from God, so by repentance, we return from iniquity; and as the Lord at all times commands the righteous by his word, so they even force him sometimes to command them by his rod, which is called discipline in the former part of the verse, because sinners feel paine, and find matter to learn, all at once. *He commandeth that they return*

from iniquity.

The word rendred *iniquity*, signifies a vain, empty thing, a thing *in habet fig.* of nought: so the Chaldee paraphraseth it here, *He commands that* *nificationem*
they return from their evil works, which are like to vanity, and a *nibili.*
thing of nought. What is sin, but a kind of nothing? we look for *Ab operi-*
great matters from sin, but it is a vanity, it is (like an Idol) *bus sui malū,*
nothing quæ similia
in the world, that is, it is not such a thing as it doth import, or as sunt vanitati
it promiseth, or as the opinion of men make it to be; Iniquity is *ex nihilo.*
no such thing as it pretendeth, or as is pretended. *The Lord* *Chald:*
commandeth that they return from iniquity; that is, from doing that
which will profit them nothing at all, or no more than a vaine
thing, a thing of nothing can. And yet though iniquity be nothing
good or profitable, yet 'tis all things evil and hurtfull, nor had
any thing ever hurt us or been evil to us, had it not been for ini-
quity. *He commandeth that they return from iniquity.*

Hence Note;

First, *Affliction hath a voyce; God speaks loudly to us by affliction.*

He speaks to us as loud in his works, as he doth in his word; he trumpets to us, he thunders to us in his works: God speaks a-
loud, but sweetly, to us in his works of mercy, he speaks aloud,
but terribly, to us in his works of judgement.

H h

Secondly,

Secondly, Seeing, as was touched in opening the words, this command is not to be taken for a standing Law, for so God alwayes commands men to return from iniquity, but the command here is a renewed act or a special dispensation, there is, as it were, a fresh command issued, when a man is under the afflicting hand of God.

Hence Note ;

God reinforceth or reneweth his command to return from sin, as often as he reneweth our afflictions.

That we return from iniquity, is a standing, an everlasting Law, but when we are in affliction, then there is, as it were, a fresh Edition of the command, 'tis, as I may say, new printed and proclaimed, the fencers print this command upon our heels, and the cords upon our hands, that we return from iniquity.

Thirdly, Note ;

Iniquity is a vaine thing, it is a nothing.

Shall we not then return from it ? one would think a little persuasion might serve the turn to hasten our return from a nothing, and shall not a command do it ? when I say a nothing, remember, (as was shewed) sin is no such thing as you look upon it to be : where are the profits that you have reaped by sin ? where are the contents and pleasures that you have taken by sin ? the profit, the pleasure, and content of sin are nothing, there is no advantage to be had by sin. Sin is something in the ill effects of it ; if you would have paine, and dishonour, and reproach, you may have enough of it in sin, and you will find sin a something in that sense ; but sin is a nothing, that is, no such thing as you expect and look for, and therefore be perswaded to return from it.

Lastly, From the whole text take notice of the purpose of God, what he hath in his heart, when he afflicteth his people, the righteous, for their iniquities and sayings, for their faults and uneven walkings. The scope of God in all this, is not their hurt, but good ; it is not to destroy them for their sin, but to destroy their sin ; it is not to withdraw himself from them, but to draw them nearer to himself ; all the hurt that the Lord intends us by any affliction, is but to get out our dross, and to fetch out our filth, to bring us off from those things that will undo and ruine us for ever.

ever. And how great an argument of the goodness of God is it, that he designeth the evils which we suffer in these dying bodies, to heal the evils, and help on the good of our immortal souls! that's all the hurt that the Lord means us. And the Lords heart is so much in this design (the return of those he afflicts from their iniquity) that he seems confident of it, that when any are in affliction, surely they will return, (*Hosea 5. 15.*) *In their affliction they will seek me early*, surely they will. And therefore the Prophet speaks of the Lord as defeated and disappointed of his purpose, when he seeth such as he hath afflicted continuing in their sin, (*Isa. 9. 13.*) *The people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts*: As if he had said, 'Tis a wonder, that being smitten they have not returned; what a strange, what a cross-grain'd people are these! What? doth the Lord smite you that you should run farther from him, and follow your iniquity closer, or hold it faster? you may be ashamed that you turn not unto him that speaks to you; but when you are smitten will you not return from iniquity? remember, the Lord therefore suffers you to be bound in fetters, that you may be loosed from your sins; he therefore suffers you to be holden in the cords of affliction, that you might let go your transgressions. Take heed you be not found disappointing him of his purpose. How well it will be with those who do not disappoint him, and how ill 'tis like to be with such as do, will appear further and fully in the two next verses.

J O B, Chap. 36. Vers. 11, 12.

11. *If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their dayes in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.*

12. *But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.*

IN the former Context we heard, what the blessed designes of God are upon the righteous, when they are bound in fetters, and holden in the cords of affliction, namely, to convince them of their sin, to fit them for the receiving of Instruction, and to bring them clear off from iniquity.

In these two verses *Elisha* proceedeth to shew what the issue of those afflictions will be, in a double respect or case.

First, In case the afflicted come up to and answer the fore-mentioned designes of God; that is, if they take knowledge of their sin, if their ears be opened to Instruction, if they return from iniquity; what then? he tells us (v. 11.) *If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their dayes in prosperity, and their years in pleasures*; that shall be the issue, the blessed issue of all the afflictions with which they were exercised.

Secondly, He shews us how those afflictions will issue in case the afflicted come not up to those designes of God, in case they are not brought to a knowledge of sin, nor receive instruction, nor return from iniquity; what then? he tells us that (v. 12.) *if they obey not* (this will be the consequent of their obduracy) *they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge*. We have a parallel Scripture to this almost in terms, (*Isa. 19. 20.*) *If ye hear and obey, ye shall eat the good of the Land, but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword*. This text not only carries the sense, but almost the words, by which *Elisha* expresseth both the Lords pleasure and displeasure in this place to *Job*.

Vers. 11. *If they obey, or hear,*

That is, take out the lesson taught them; if they do that which the affliction teacheth them, or which God teacheth by their affliction,

fiction, by their cords and fetters, *then*, &c. The same word is frequently in Scripture used for *obeying* and *hearing*, (*Psal.* 81. 8, 11, 13. *Psal.* 95. 7.) To what purpose is our hearing the will of God without obedience to it? When young *Samuel* laid at the Lord's call, *Speak, for thy servant heareth*, (*1 Sam.* 3. 10.) his meaning was, Lord, I am ready to do what thou speakest. *We hear no more than we obey*, and therefore obeying and hearing may well be exprest by the same word. The text is plain, I shall only give this Note, and pass on;

It is our duty to hear and obey when-ever God calls or speaks, either in his word or in his works.

That which this text holds out specially is the voice of God in his works, what God speaks by Fetters, what he speaks by Cords. If ever we hear and obey the voice of the Lord, it should be when he teacheth us (as *Gideon* taught the men of *Succoth*, *Judg.* 8. 16.) *with thornes and briars of the wilderness.* O let us take care of hearing and obeying this voice. For First, God is the Lord, and therefore to be obeyed. Secondly, God is a Sovereign Lord, and therefore much more to be obeyed. Thirdly, As all the Commands, so all the Chastisements of God are just and righteous, therefore they are most of all to be obeyed. Fourthly, To obey the Commands of God, whether taught us in his Word or by his Rod, is good, yea best for us, therefore we should obey for our own good. *If they obey*

And serve him, or worship him.

The word which here we render to *serve*, is very often in Scripture rendred to *worship*, and sometimes worshipping is expounded by serving, (*Mat.* 4. 10.) *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him onely shalt thou serve*; that also is the mind of the Text, *If they obey and serve him.*

Religio at nū-
mū cultus est
servitū quā-
dam.

Hence note;

The Lord expects our service, and then especially, when we suffer.

Religion and the Worship of God, in the whole compais of it, is nothing else but service, a blessed service, a free service, a service infinitely more free than any thing the world calls freedom.

(*Exod.*

(Exod. 4. 23.) *Let my Son go that he may serve me, that is, worship me.* All the Sons of God are his Servants, and they have most of the Son in them who have most of the Servant in them. If any deny him service they deny their sonship, or rather (as the Apostle speaks of Non-sufferers in one kind or other, Heb. 12. 8.) They are bastards, not sons; yea, God expects whole and all service from us, or that we should serve him *with our all*, (Deut. 10. 12.) *Thou shalt serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart.* We must serve the Lord, not only with the best we have, but with all the best, with the heart, and all the heart. We serve God no further than we obey him, and we worship him no further than we serve him, and that heartily.

To serve God, (as to love God) is a very comprehensive word, 'tis the summe of all the duty of Man. To serve God is to submit both to what he commands us, and to what he layeth upon us. To serve God is to submit to what he would have us do, and to whatsoever he is pleased to do with us; and so we serve him particularly under sufferings: We should alwayes serve him actively, and we are called sometimes to serve him passively. All Believers are free, and yet they must serve; and they are made free on purpose to serve: We are purchased by the blood of Christ, that we might serve him. *Because we are bought with a price, we must not be the servants of men*, saith the Apostle, (1 Cor. 7. 23.) Whose servants then? Surely the servants of God. We are conquered that we might serve. The Latines say, that a *Servant* is one that is saved in War, taken and saved. So it is with all the people of God, they are taken in the holy war, they are taken prisoners, and so made servants to Jesus Christ. Yet Believers are servants, not only by conquest, but compact and covenant; every godly man hath, as it were, sealed Indentures with God, he hath (upon the matter) put his ear to the Lords post to be boared thorow, (as you read, Exod. 21. 6.) that he may be his servant for ever. The Lord expects service.

But what is it to serve him?

First, *To serve him is to do his Will.*

Secondly, *To serve him is to do his whole Will.* It is not the doing of this or that piece of the Will of God, or this or that parch of the Will of God, which renders us his servants; but the doing his whole Will.

Third-

*Servus tan-
quam in bello
servatus.*

Thirdly, **To serve him is to do his Will only; so saith the Scripture, Him only shalt thou serve.** If it may be supposed, that we could do the whole Will of God, and yet do the will of any other, or do our own will too, in any thing contrary to his, we were not his servants; if we serve him not alone, or if we serve him not only, that is, if in serving man we aim not chiefly at the serving of him, or if all our services to men are not subservient, or not in subordination to the service of God, we serve him not at all.

Fourthly, I may add this also, **To serve God is to do every thing under this contemplation, that, what we do is the Will of God.** 'Tis very possible for a man to do that which is the Will of God, and yet not to serve him in doing it; which we never do till we do it because it is the Will of God. **His Will must be not only the Rule of what we do, but the very Reason why we do it, else our doings are not his servings.** They that do not attend this, serve God but as a beast may serve him, a beast may do that which is the Will of God; the inanimate creatures serve him so; We hear of *stormy winds and tempests fulfilling his will*, (*Psal. 148.*) All living, yea, liveless creatures do that which is his Will, but they do not attend this, that it is his Will which they do. So that, I say, to do his Will, not considering that it is his Will, is to serve him no otherwise than beasts, or than the winds or stormes serve him: And to do his Will, aiming at our own wills or ends, is to serve him but as a hypocrite serves him. A hypocrite doth not serve God in what he doth, though he doth many things which are materially the Will of God, because in all he minds his own will more than the Will of God.

Lastly, **We must serve God as Sons, (*Mal. 3. 17.*) A Son serveth no less than a Servant, yea much more, though not as a servant; for he knoweth more of his Fathers mind than a meer servant doth (*Joh. 15. 15.*) and he knoweth, that he shall have also, though not Wages at the end of every day, yet the inheritance in the end. *Obadiah* was the proper name of one good man, and it is a name common to all good men; they are (as that word imports) *Servants of the Lord.* **It is a common Theam to urge men to serve God, but it is a rare thing to be indeed a servant of God. To serve God is the Summe and Marrow of all knowledge**
in.**

in divinity, and the great end why we came into this World and for which we are here detained. Nor is it an easie matter to come up to, or attain the holy skill of serving such a Lord and Master as he: There must be a doing of his Will, and of his whole Will, and of his Will only, and that under this precise contemplation, that it is his Will, to denominate us his servants, or to make a proof that we serve him.

Now whether God teacheth us by his Word, or by his Rod (which is the teaching of this context) **O how readily should we obey and serve him!** To serve him is not only the design of our being made free, that is, we were not onely made free to serve him, but to serve him is our freedom (as was touch't before) yea, to serve him is not onely to be free, but to serve him is to reign and rule. They that serve God to purpose reign over the lusts of the evil World without, and over their own lusts within; nor can any reign over the lusts of the world without, or their own within, but only they who serve him, and only so far as they serve him. Every gracious act of service to God is the subjugation or bringing under of some lust or other in man.

Now if any should say, surely this is a very sad Life, to be alwayes serving, or to lead only the life of a servant.

I answer, To serve God, or the service of God is sweet, pleasant and easie in a twofold respect. First, comparatively, to the service of sin and the world, of lust and the devil; that's a weariness indeed as well as a busenes. Secondly, It is easie also if we consider the help we have in it. The people of God serve him in a Covenant of Grace, which, as it calls them to work, so it gives them help to work. The New Covenant doth not call us (as *Pharaoh* did the children of *Israel*) to make brick and deny us straw; yea, under that Covenant, we have not onely straw afforded us to make our brick, but we have strength afforded us to make our brick; that is, the very power by which we serve our Master is given in by our Master. The Masters of this world set us a work, but they give us no strength, but what work soever God sets his Covenant-servants about, he gives them strength to do it. Then, O how sweet is it to serve him, and how readily should our hearts come off in his service! Let me add one thing more (which brings us to the next words) serve him, for his is not a lean service, nor an unprofitable service, there is a reward

reward promiſed to thoſe who ſerve him; yea, **his very ſervice is a reward, his work is wages.** Therefore what calls ſoever we have from him let us answer and ſerve him. **There are two things which ſhould be the daily meditation of Saints, or they ſhould be continually acquainting themſelves with them.** Firſt, *The Croſs of Chriſt*, that they may know how, and be willing to ſuffer for him. Secondly, *The Yoke of Chriſt*, that they may know how, and be willing to ſerve him. *If they obey and ſerve him, What then?* even that which was the laſt conſideration provoking us to his ſervice, there is a reward in it; *If they obey and ſerve him,*

They ſhall ſpend their dayes in proſperity and their years in pleaſures.

Here's good wages; who would not ſerve that Maſter who will pay him for his work in that deſireable coyne, Pleaſure and Proſperity? *They ſhall ſpend their dayes in proſperity*, that is, they ſhall run out their dayes in proſperity, their dayes and their proſperity ſhall be like two parallel lines, one as long as the other. The word which we tranſlate *to ſpend*, ſignifies *to finiſh*, and that in a double reſpect; Firſt, in a way of Conſumption; Secondly, in a way of Perfection or Consummation. That which is conſumed is finiſhed, or ended. So the word is uſed (*Pſal. 90. 7.*) (*Numb. 16. 45.*) The Lord ſaith to Moſes, *Go you up from this Congregation, that I may conſume them in a moment*; I will diſpatch them and make an end of them preſently. The Lord can ſoon rid his hand of ſinners. And as it notes a conſuming by ſuddain judgements, by diſeaſes or age, ſo by longing or deſire, (*2 Sam. 23. 15.*) *And David longed* ('tis this word, he was even ſpent and conſumed with a longing deſire) *and ſaid, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate.* Now as that which is conſumed or ſpent, ſo that which is perfected is finiſhed. Thus, *Moſes* having ſet down the particulars of the whole work of Creation ſummes all up in this word, (*Gen. 2. 1, 2.*) *Thus the heavens and the Earth were finiſhed, and all the hoſt of them*; that is, God compleated or brought that great work of Creation to its utmoſt perfection, he put (as we may ſpeak) his laſt hand to it, there was nothing more to be added. Here in the text we are to take this word *ſpend*, not only as it often ſignifies, **to ſpend in a way of Conſumption, but alſo to ſpend in a way of**

כלל
Significat tum
conſumere, tum
conſummare,
ſignificat etiam
conſumi deſide-
rio, quod dici-
tur aliquem
deperire amore.

Perfection, they shall perfect, not barely wear out their dayes. A godly man hath not so much consumed as perfected the dayes of his life, when he is come to and hath ended the last day of his life. *They shall spend their dayes*

בטוב
in bono, i. e.
in omni iucun-
ditate.

In prosperity, or in good (saith the Original)

Prosperity is a good thing, a good blessing of God. They shall spend their dayes in good, we translate it in the 21 Chapter v. 15. *in wealth*. Wealth also is a good blessing of God to those that are good, and prosperity takes that in; prosperity is a large word comprehending all good, health and wealth, honour and peace: what-ever we can imagine to render our lives comfortable comes under the name of Prosperity, *They shall spend their dayes in prosperity, or in good*; this reward they shall have from the Lord who serve him. Is not this good wages? The carnal rich man pleased himself and said, (Luke 12. 19.) *Soul, take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up for many yeares.* The godly do not please themselves, that they have goods laid up for many yeares in their own Stock, in their Lands, in their Houses, in their Purles, in their Shops, but they please themselves that they have good laid up for many yeares, yea, for eternity, in the Promises of God. They who serve him, they shall spend their dayes in good, they shall have good for every day, and so finish their dayes with good; yet this is not all, *They shall spend their dayes in prosperity,*

And their yeares in Pleasures.

In the former words he promised dayes of Good, here yeares of Pleasure; as if he had said, they shall enjoy their prosperity long, they shall not only have Dayes but Yeares filled up with it. One yeare containes many dayes, how many dayes of pleasure are there in yeares of pleasure! *Our life is measured by days to shew the shortness of it; the longest measure of it is by yeares; They shall spend their yeares*

בנשים
in iucunda.
נעם
Afferit iucunditatem, delectationem, pulchritudinem.

In Pleasures, or (as we may read it) in sweetneses, in pleasantneses, in deliciousneses, in beauties.

The word is used (2 Sam. 1. 23.) to shew the loveliness of Jonathan and Saul, they were a pleasant pair, a couple of goodly persons. *They shall spend their dayes in pleasantnes, or in pleasures.*

Further,

Further, Take notice, the word is plural; he doth not say, they shall spend their dayes in pleasure, but in pleasures, implying all sorts and varieties of pleasure; in *Songs*, saith one; in *Marriage Songs*, saith a second; in *graceful Beauties*, saith a third; and, which may be all or any of these, in *delights*, saith a fourth.

But here are two Questions that I must give answer to, for the clearing of this Scripture.

First, The Question may be, *Is this a mercy much to be reckoned upon, to spend our years in pleasure?* saith not the Apostle (1 Tim. 5. 6.) *The widow that lives in pleasure is dead while she lives?* If it be a dead life to live in pleasure, how then is it here promised as a favour, as a mercy, to them that obey and serve God, that they shall spend their years in pleasures?

I answer by distinguishing of pleasure; pleasures are of two sorts. First, lawful and honest delights; of such we read (Gen. 49. 20.) where dying Jacob blessing of *Asaph* saith, *He shall yield royal dainties, or pleasures for a King*; meaning, he shall give, not only honest, but honourable pleasures and contentments, such as befit Kings. Secondly, There are unlawful and dishonest pleasures, which the Apostle calleth (Heb. 11. 25.) *the pleasures of sin for a season*. A wo will be their portion who live in such pleasures. *Go to now ye rich men, weep and howl* (saith the Apostle James, Chap. 5. 1.) why so? among other Reasons this is given for one (vers. 5.) *Ye have lived in pleasure, wantonizing, and gluttonizing, and Epicurizing*: in such base pleasures you have lived, therefore wo to you. To live in sinful or unlawful pleasures is death and misery, or a life worse than death; but to live a life of lawful and honest pleasure is a mercy, the mercy here promised, and the very life of our lives.

Secondly, We may distinguish of pleasures thus; they are either, first, Corporal pleasures, pleasures of the body, of which we read (Job 21. 25.) *One dyeth in his full strength, and another dyeth in the bitterness of his Soul, and never eateth in pleasure*; that is, he hath had no contentment in the body, or no bodily contentment, but was alwayes sickly, crazy, pining, languishing, and ill at ease, his life was tedious, even a burden to him, for he could never eat in pleasure, scarce tast what he did eat. Secondly, There are Spiritual pleasures (Psal. 36. 8.) *They shall drink of the Rivers of thy pleasures*. David speaks there of Saints, what enjoy-

rei nobis gratif-
simæ. In Can-
ticis Targ. in
Epithalimio
Mund. & cu-
peretur,
Sept. in dele-
stationibus.
Pagn.

Dabit delicias
regis. Hebræ
Mont:

ments and Joyes they have in the Church or Houle of God, attending upon him in holy Ordinances. Thirdly, There are eternal pleasures (*Psal. 16. 11.*) *In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.* Such are all the joyes of Heaven, or of a glorified state. Now when *Elisha* saith, *they shall spend their years in pleasures*, we are not to take it meerly for honest corporal pleasures, for such a life, at best, is but the life of a Beast; but we are to take these corporal pleasures, either as heighned by better, that is, as spiritualiz'd by the lenie of the love of God, and mixed with spiritual pleasures; or, for those purely spiritual pleasures which the soul finds in communion with God alone (having nothing to do, or no intercourse with creatures) drinking at the River of his pleasures in Prayer, in Hearing, in Meditation, in breaking Bread, in Singing. Now to spend our dayes, either in these purely spiritual pleasures, taking in also those corporal pleasures so qualified as before, and duly circumstantiated, is a high, a very high blessing and mercy indeed. So then, here is nothing to feed the fancy of Epicures, here is no promise of sensual, though of sensitive pleasures, these only are pleasures fit for the Servants of God, these pleasures only become Saints; as for those other pleasures, Christ saith of them in the Parable of the Sower (*Luke 8. 14.*) *They choak the Word of God*; and God will not feed his people with such pleasures, as a reward of serving him, as shall choak the Word, and unfit them for his service. No, we are to watch against, and deny our selves such pleasures, as our Lord Jesus caution'd his Disciples (*Luke 21. 34.*) *Take heed, lest at any time your hearts be over-charged with surfeiting, drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.* As if he had said, Take heed of carnal pleasures, as much as of worldly cares, for as they are alike destructive to the present purity of the Soul, so they alike endanger our future peace, and lay us open to the surprize of Judgment. And as such pleasures ruine the state of the soul, so of the body too, with which they have nearest cognation. Hence that of *Solomon* (*Prov. 21. 17*) *He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man.* There, pleasure is opposed to work or labour: He that is all for taking his pleasure, and will not follow his Calling, this man comes quickly to poverty, and will dye a Beggar. Suppose the pleasure be lawful, yet if he loves pleasure, and is at his pleasure

sure when he should be at his labour, he will soon be reduced to a morsel of bread, and become a poor man: But he that loveth unlawful pleasures, shall not only be a poor man, but will prove a wicked man. *Thou that art given to pleasures* (Isa. 47. 8.) is the Character of *Babylon*. God gives good men pleasure, but 'tis the mark of an evil man to be given to pleasure. They that *love pleasure, are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God* (2 Tim. 3. 4.) and such must needs be the worst of men.

And therefore we are not to understand this Text of any sinful pleasure, nor of a life meerly lead in lawful pleasure, that a man should be all upon his pleasure, and lay aside his Calling; *Elisha* doth not oppose pleasure to work, labour or business, but to trouble, sorrow, and affliction. They that obey and serve the Lord shall spend their years in pleasures, in honest pleasures, that is, they shall live, not only contentedly, but joyfully. The Lord alloweth us to take any honest pleasure while we live, but not to live in pleasure; he alloweth us to take our delights, but our delights must not take us.

There is yet another Query, for it may be said, Is this a truth, that they who obey and serve the Lord *shall spend their dayes in prosperity, and their years in pleasures*? I answer to that,

First, If we take it absolutely and universally, we cannot affirm that every one who serveth and obeyeth God, shall alwayes have pleasure, that is, outward comforts and contentments in this world; many of the Lords faithfull servants have lived in paine and sorrow; so that if (as *David* spake in this case, *Psal.* 73. 5.) *we should speak thus, we should offend against the generation of his servants*. Some flourish in grace, who wither in worldly comforts. There is no certain connexion between these two, Grace and outward peace or pleasure; the providences of God vary in this poynt as himself pleaseth. Neither is it true, that the true servants of God do uninterruptedly or alwayes enjoy inward pleasures, comforts and contentments; for he that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voyce of his servants, may walk in darkness, and trouble of spirit, *and see no light*, (Isa. 50. 10.) We are therefore to understand this Scripture as others of like nature, of that which is commonly done, or of that which we may upon good ground expect from God, and in faith wait for, that if we serve and obey him, he will make our lives comfortable to us. I answer,

Secondly,

Secondly, This promise, or promises of a like nature were fitted to the time wherein *Elihu* spake; he spake of the times long before Christs appearing in the flesh, when the Lord did, as it were, lead on his people very much by promises, of temporal and outward prosperity, of which the Scripture is more sparing in the new Testament, where we are come to the fulness of Christ, and the riches of the grace of God to us in him; of which there is but little (comparatively) spoken in the old Testament: And therefore under that darker dispensation of spirituals, the Lord saw it good to encourage that people to obedience by a multitude of very particular outward promises, as we may read (*Deut. 28.*) He would bless their basket and their store, the fruit of the field, &c. These promises were fitted to the state of that under-age people, who were led on and enticed by visible and sensible blessings, as we do children with toys and Gaudes; and indeed all visible enjoyments are but such in comparison of spirituals. Believers under the Gospel being come to a higher state, to fuller attainments, the promises made to them run not much in that channel; yet it cannot be denied, that the Gospel also holds out promises for temporals, as well as the Law; and this latter dispensation of the Covenant as well as the former, hath provided sufficiently for our outward comforts.

Thirdly, For answer, let us consider the drift of the Spirit of God in this promise of pleasure. *Job* had often complained of his own sorrowfull condition, and concluded himself a man of sorrow for all the remainder of his dayes: though his faith was strong for the resurrection of his body after death, yet he had little, if any faith at all, that he should be raised out of that miserable estate wherein he was in this life. He also had spoken somewhat rashly and amiss concerning the dealings of God with his servants in general, as if nothing but trouble and sorrow, did attend them, and that the wicked went away with all the sweet and good of this world. Now *Elihu* to take him off from these sad, and almost despairing thoughts, as to the return of his own comforts, and to rectifie his judgement in the general poynt, as to the dealings of God with others; he assureth *Job*, that if righteous men being bound in fetters, &c. hear and obey, God will break those bonds, and cut the cords of their affliction, and they shall spend (the remainder of) their dayes in prosperity, and (the rest of) their years in pleasures,

pleasures. So that *Elihu* in holding out this promise to *Job*, would rather clear his judgement from an error concerning the lastingness or continuance of his pains and sorrows, than heat his affections in the expectation of joyes and pleasures in this world.

Fourthly, I answer, Though the people of God have not alwayes dayes of such outward prosperity, nor years of such sensitive pleasures, yet they have that which is better, and if they have no pleasures, they do not want them. The Apostle could say (*Phil. 4. 11.*) *I have learned in what state soever I am, therewith to be content.* What is pleasure if content be not? We may have outward pleasures, yet no content, but he that hath content within, cannot miss of pleasure. A man may have riches, but no contentment, but he that hath contentment is very rich; (*1 Tim. 6. 6.*) *Godliness with contentment is great gaine,* and great gaine is prosperity: this great gaine, this heart-pleasure, or soul-rest, contentment, is the assured portion of those who obey and serve the Lord, what-ever their outward portion be in this world. And he may be said to spend his dayes in good, and his years in pleasure, who hath these pure gaines of gracious contentment, resting the soul in God in all conditions. *The life of man* (that is, the comfort of his life) doth not consist in the abundance of that which he possesseth, (*Luke 12. 15.*) nor in sense-pleasures; but in that sweet composure and sedateness of his soul, resting by faith in the promises of God, or rather in the God of the promises, and so sucking sweetness from them.

Lastly, As though a servant of God should be exercised with sorrows all the dayes of his life, yet he cannot be said to spend his dayes in sorrow, because he meets with many refreshing intervals and shines of favour from the face of God in the midst of those clouds; so he may be said to spend his dayes in pleasure, because at least, when his dayes here are spent, he consummates his dayes (which is one signification of the word) by an entrance into everlasting pleasures.

So much for the answer of these questions, concerning this promise, *They shall spend their dayes in prosperity, and their years in pleasure.* From the promise it self, Note;

First, *Obedience to God is profitable to man.*

God hath no profit by our Obedience, but we have. God doth
not.

not call us to serve him in his work, as we call servants to do our work, to get his living by us, or better himself; no, the Lord calls us to serve him and obey him, for our own good. *They consult their own good best, who do most good.* I may say these three things of those who do good (and what is serving God, but doing of good? or what is doing good but serving God?) First, they shall receive true good; Secondly, they shall for ever hold the best good, the chief good, they shall not only spend their dayes and years in good, but when their dayes and years are spent, they shall have good, and a greater good than any they had, in spending the dayes and years of this life; they shall have good in death, they shall come to a fuller enjoyment of God, the chief Good, when they have left and let fall the possession of all earthly goods. Thirdly, they that do good shall find all things working together for their good; if they have a loss, they shall receive good by it; if they bear a Cross, that shall bear good. *Outward troubles cannot disturb, much less pollute our spiritual good;* for, *All things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to his purpose* (Rom. 8. 28.) Surely then the service of God is a gainful service, a profitable service; though the work may be hard, and the way painful, yet the wages will be sweet, and the end pleasant. The contemplation of this put David upon putting that question (Psal. 34. 12, 13.) *What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many dayes, that he may see good* (that is, *that he may enjoy good*) *keep thy tongue from evil, and thy mouth, that it speak no guile; depart from evil, and do good.* The Psalmist makes Proclamation, *What man is he that would have good? let him do good, let him obey and serve God, and he shall have good.*

Again, Consider the Promise in relation to the Persons described, vers. 8, 9, 10. *They were bound in Fetters, and holden in Cords of affliction:* Now saith Elihu here, *they shall spend their dayes in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.*

Hence Note;

There is no condition so low and forlorn, but the Lord is able to bring us out of it, and into the enjoyments of fullest comforts;

He can change our Iron Fetters, and Cords, into Rings of Gold,

Gold, and Bracelets; he can translate our dayes of trouble, and our years of pain, into dayes of prosperity, and years of pleasure; it was so with *Job* in the issue, and he was the man that *Elihu* here intended. *Job* was long bound in fetters, and holden in the cords of affliction, yet as *Elihu* told him he should, so he did afterwards, spend his dayes in prosperity, and his years in pleasure; the Lord doubled his Cattel to him, his friends fil'd his Coffers, and his Cabinets, *Every man gave him a piece of money, and every one an Ear-ring of Gold*; his children also were the same for number, his daughters the fairest in the Land; himself also lived in the fulness of this outward Prosperity, till he was full of dayes, and he fed upon the delicious fruits of this Promise all his after-dayes. *Manasseh* having run a course of unparallel'd wickedness, was at last taken by the Captains of the host of the King of Assyria, among the Thorns, and they bound him with fetters, and carryed him to Babylon (2 Chron. 33. 11.) yet when in his affliction he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his Fathers, he was entreated of him, and brought again to Jerusalem, where he spent his dayes in prosperity, and his years in pleasure. If we turn to the Lord in affliction, the Lord is ready to turn away our affliction, or (as the Church prayed in the half turn of her affliction, *Psal. 126. 4.*) *to turn our captivity, as the streams in the South*; that is, to make both a most admirable and a most comfortable turn of our condition. Streams in the hot Southern Countries are rare; the Rain of those Lands usually is dust. Streams in the South are also very welcome: How glad are they of a cooling Showre from a Cloud, who daily feel, and are fainted with the scorching Beams of the Sun! Such a turn shall they have (saith *Elihu*) who being holden in the cords of affliction, turn from iniquity, obey and serve the Lord.

Thirdly, From the matter of the Promise,

Note: *A comfortable passage through this life, is a very great mercy, as well as the hope of happiness for ever in the other life.*

'Tis prosperity and pleasure in this world, though not meer worldly prosperity and pleasure, which is here promised; and we are not to slight any thing that comes by promise, yea, we should highly esteem those things, which, considered in them-

K k

selves,

selves, are little worth, as they come to us through the Promise. We may quickly over-rate and over-reckon outward things in themselves, and we ever do so, if we rate or reckon them any better than vanity; but as they are promised and bestowed in a way of favour from God, and as they are a part of the purchase of Christ, and handed to us by him (so are even outward things to believers) thus they are very valuable. Upon these terms to live and spend our days in good, and our years in honest lawful pleasures, is a great mercy.

From the whole take two Corolaries.

First, *How blasphemous then is their Opinion, who say it is a vain thing to serve the Lord, or that there is no profit in calling upon him!* which blasphemy was refuted Chap. 21. 14.

Secondly, Would we have a good end of, or out-gate from our afflictions, then let us hear and obey. Thus much of the first case, what the issue of their afflictions shall be, who obey: The Second issue upon the contrary case, followeth in the 12th verse.

Vers. 12. *But if they obey not, they shall perish by the Sword, and dye without knowledge.*

Here contraries are set one over against another, for their fuller illustration. *If they obey not*; that is, if those righteous men spoken of before (vers. 7.) *obey not*. *What it is not to obey, is clear by what I said was to obey, in opening the former verse.* I shall only take notice, that in this latter part it is not said, *If they obey not, and serve him not*, but only, *if they obey not*; and I conceive, *Elihu* saith no more, or proceeds no further, because they who deny obedience, will certainly deny service; therefore he stops at that.

If they obey not.

They who are good in their state, may often fail in doing that which is good; for of those this Text yet speaks, and is generally interpreted. The Hypocrite in heart is spoken of in the next verse, but here *Elihu* is speaking of the righteous, and because he is so, therefore by this disobedience cannot be meant an obstinate rebellion, but a sloth or carelessness in attending to the Call of God, for the amendment of some evil in their lives. *If they obey not*:

Hence

Hence Note ;

The calls and commands of God are not alwayes obeyed, no not by good men, nor by the righteous.

The call and command of God is not at all obeyed by the wicked, and it is not alwayes obeyed by the righteous. The righteous sometimes hear the word, but do not answer it, and sometimes they feel the rod, and do not attend it ; they cry out of the smart of the rod, and of the sores which the lathes of the rod have made upon them, they weep over, or because of their sores, yet they do not presently give glory to God by obeying him, and leaving their sinnes, I mean as to that special point of duty in which God would have them obey him, and as to those special sins which God by that affliction calls upon them to leave. Many good men do not presently understand the purpose of God in this or that affliction ; and while it is so with them, they must needs fail in answerableness to it. I know every godly man hath a general bent to obey God and serve him. It is not with the godly in their afflictions as with the wicked under theirs, of whom the Prophet speaks, (*Isa. 9. 13.*) *They did not turn to him that smote them*; yet even such Scriptures are in a degree applicable to many of the people of God, *they do not alwayes turn to him that smiteth them*; when they are exercised with variety of calamities, they mind not the Lord as they ought. And hence it is (I say) that though the righteous have a general bent to obedience, yet they sometimes come short of that obedience which a special affliction or correction calleth them to ; yea, they may be so short in answering it, that the Lord may proceed to lay heavier and greater afflictions upon them, even to the taking of them out of the world, as it followeth in this verse, *If they obey not*

They shall perish by the sword.

Before they were bound in fetters and held in cords, but now ^{*De carcere e-*} the sword shall overtake them, and they shall ^{*ducentur ad oc-*} *perish or be taken a-* ^{*cisionem gladij*} *way by the sword*: The Hebrew is, *they shall pass away by the sword*, that is, they shall die. Man is said to pass away by the ^{*Aquin. Per*} sword, when the sword doth not pass by him, but smites and kills ^{*gladium trans-*} him, which is a temporal perishing. It is said (*Isa. 57. 1.*) ^{*ve dicitur q. i*} *no, Druf.*

K k 2

The

The righteous perish, &c. As the righteous perish by a natural death, so they may perish by a violent death, and possibly that may fall upon them when they attend not the providential dispensations of God:

כשלה
Proprie est
missile, aut ja-
culum.

They shall perish by the sword, or by the drawn weapon. The word notes any weapon that is drawn or cast forth, hence some translate it a Dart or Javeling, which is shot out of the hand; but it may also be applied to the Sword, which being drawn forth out of the sheath is often sent upon deadly messages, and may be numbered among missile weapons: Now when *Elihu* saith, *they shall perish by the sword*, we may take the word *sword* properly or tropically. Properly two ways; First, for the sword of the Warrior; Secondly, for the sword of the Magistrate, either justly punishing or grievously afflicting. Some good men have acknowledged in great trials and sufferings, under the hand of man, that God hath met with them for their neglect or non-attendance to more immediate afflictions under his own hand. Again, take the sword tropically or improperly, and so any sore affliction that greatly annoyeth, especially if to death, is called a sword in Scripture; *They shall perish by the sword* (under one notion or other) *if they do not obey.*

Hence learn;

God will not spare, no not his own People, if they do not obey him.

God is full of sparing-mercy, but the righteous may provoke him so, that he will not spare, no not them. Judgement begins often at the house of God (1 Pet. 4. 17.) *And if Judgement begin at the house of God, what shall the end be of those that obey not the Gospel?* This is a terrible word. The righteous may perish by the sword; how dreadfully then shall the unrighteous, the wicked, the scorers of godliness, perish! If God will make his own people smart in his anger, when they provoke him, how will he speak to his enemies in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure (Psal. 2. 5.)

Secondly, From the gradation of their troubles; First, they were bound in fetters and holden in cords, but now here's a sword, a devouring sword, a killing deadly weapon.

Hence

Hence learn ;

*They who give not glory to God in lesser or in lighter afflictions
draw greater upon themselves;*

They may come from a cord to a sword, from being bound to be slain. God hath several sorts of Instruments to chasten his people with, and as the best of outward good things may be the portion of evil wicked men, so the worst of outward evils may be the portion of good men ; they may at any time, and sometimes *shall perish by the sword*, and as it follows,

They shall die without knowledge.

The sword is death, a deadly sword ; *they shall die*

Without knowledge, or, as the text may be read, *because they were without knowledge.*

But is any righteous man without knowledge ? *That the soul be without knowledge is not good*, (saith Solomon, *Prov. 19. 2.*) How then can he be good whose soul is without knowledge ? And seeing we interpret this text of the righteous, how can it be said, *they die without knowledge* ?

I answer, Knowledge may be taken in a more general sense, and so no righteous man either lives or dies without knowledge ; he neither lives nor dies without the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ, *whom to know is eternal life*, (*John 17. 3.*) and without the knowledge of whom, all (who are actually capable of such knowledge) must die eternally ; he neither lives nor dies without the knowledge of himself as a sinner, and of Christ who saveth him from his sins. Such ignorances are inconsistent with the state of a godly man ; he may do foolishly, but he is not a fool ; he may be wanting in some kind of knowledge, but he doth not want knowledge ; he cannot be without saving knowledge, though he may perish (temporally) *without knowledge*. The first thing that God makes in the new creation is light, the light of knowledge, there he begins his work ; therefore we cannot take knowledge generally, simply and absolutely, in this text ; but as knowledge may be taken restrictively, for knowledge in or about this or that particular, so a good man may want knowledge, there may be something which the Lord would acquaint the righteous with, and teach

them

בבלי ועת

Dei monita per
castigationes
eius & intelli-
gere noluerunt.
Drus.

them by their fetters and afflictions, which they do not learn; and therefore *they die without knowledge*, or, because they are without knowledge; yet that want of knowledge, together with all their other wants and ignorances, are pardoned to them.

Non est oratio
affirmativa
stultitiae vel
negativa sci-
entiae, sed sim-
plicitèr negat
adventum.
BOLD.

Further we may expound the words thus; *They shall die without knowledge*, that is, without the knowledge or consideration of that special affliction or judgement which is coming upon them; they shall die unawares, not thinking, nor so much as dreaming of such a judgement, or that such a hand of God was so near them. According to this interpretation, *Elihu* intends either their inadvertency of that approaching scourge or calamity with which they are overtaken, or their not understanding the reason of it. Christ saith in the Gospel (*Luke 12. 46.*) *The master of that servant (the evil servant) shall come in a day which he knows not of, and in a time when he looked not for him.* Now, as the last Judgement, the great Judgement shall come upon the wicked in a time when they look not for it, so the Lord may bring a special particular judgement upon some one or more of his own people, when they do not think of it, or never suspected that they should fall under it. Good men are sometimes surprized; and so, *they shall die without knowledge*, is no more than this, they shall be taken unawares by a suddain unexpected judgement. Though every godly man hath a preparation for the general judgement, yet as to a particular one, he may be much unprepared.

Lastly, Some expound the words of more than inadvertency, or bare nescience, even of folly, and some degree of affected ignorance, which possibly may prevaile upon a righteous man in some cases and for a time; but I rather adhere to the former interpretation, because (as was shewed before) the whole context seems to intend a more ordinary case of a righteous man. So then, this Scripture holds out the sad issues which the neglect of giving God the glory of his corrections and chastenings may bring upon the righteous.

Hence note;

Disobediencce, or neglect of duty, is dangerous, wheresoever it is found.

The Church of *Corinth* felt this; many of them died (in the
sence

sence given) without knowledge, or not having a due spiritual knowledge of Christ in the holy supper, which the Apostle calls, their *not discerning the Lords body*, (1 Cor. 11. 29.) and presently tells them (*ver. 30.*) *for this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep*; that is, are taken away by death. Any kind or degree of sin is dangerous; not to obey a hint of providence, not to obey an intimation of the mind of God in an affliction, may be very dangerous; afflictions may end in destructions, and fetters in death, if the purpose of God in them be not attended and answered by us.

Secondly note;
Not to obey when God calls and commands, is folly and ignorance.

Such do as if they had no knowledge at all what or how to do.

Lastly in that he saith, *they shall dye without knowledge*, we may learn this from it;

The ignorance and heedlessness of men undo them, and bring destruction upon them.

Many die because they have no knowledge, others not heeding or minding what they know. Holy David confessed that in one point he was ignorant and foolish, *even as a beast*, (Psal. 73. 22.) and when good men act like beasts, without a due improvement of reason and understanding, they may perish (as to this temporal life) like beasts, (Isa. 5. 13.) *Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge.* The Prophet (I conceive) is to be understood (as this text) not that they had no knowledge at all, or were utterly ignorant, but they had no knowledge as to that special dispensation of God, how to make use of it or improve it, at least they took no heed, no care to use or improve it; and (saith he) *they therefore are gone into captivity*, they are brought under bondage to their enemies, they are scattered, ruin'd, and (as to this world) quite lost and undone. Wicked men are undone by acting against their knowledge; good men may be undone by acting below their knowledge, or by not acting according to what they know or should have known; and so (through their ignorance or heedlessness) *they dye without knowledge.*

J O B, Chap. 36. Vers. 13, 14.

13. *But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath, they cry not when he bindeth them.*

14. *They die in youth, and their life is among the unclean.*

E *Elihu* having put the case of the righteous in these two conditional propositions last opened, as somewhat doubtful, what at least some of them may do, as to a right improvement of outward afflictions; he proceeds in these two verses to shew the case of the wicked wholly desperate, in their affliction. There is an *if* put upon the righteous, but he is conclusive upon the hypocrite; to be sure he will neither hear nor obey, neither submit nor conform to the voice of the rod.

So that in these words he sets forth the common yea constant issue of the hand of God upon *hypocrites in heart*. Possibly good men, righteous men may not alwayes answer the expectation of God, when affliction is upon them; but as for *hypocrites, they* (alwayes) *heap up wrath*. And in this we may conceive *Elihu* hath a respect to *Job*; For though he did not conclude him to be an *hypocrite in heart*, yet he put it home upon him to consider the matter, whether he himself had not, at least, acted and carried it like an *hypocrite in heart*, under the afflicting hand of God, forasmuch as he was no more humbled and subdued under it. And indeed *Elihu* turns every stone, and tryeth every way, to bring down the spirit of *Job*. And therefore as he had shewed, what the usuall effects of the hand of God upon the righteous are, so he tells him how it is with the wicked in that case, thereby to put him upon the trial, whether he had not reason to suspect himself to be an hypocrite, because his carriage, was so like theirs.

חבפי לב

Vers. 13. *But the hypocrites in heart, &c.*

That adversative particle shews that he is dealing upon another subject: *hypocrites in heart* are far from righteousness. I have discoursed somewhat largely concerning the hypocrite in chap. 34 v. 30. upon these words, *That the hypocrite reign not, lest the people*
be

snared; Therefore I intend not here to revive that subject, but shall only a little open the additional term or amplification which is here put upon the hypocrite. *Elihu* doth not say barely, *hypocrites heap up wrath*, but, *The hypocrites in heart heap up wrath*; as implying some special character and brand of hypocrisy upon the persons here aimed at. An hypocrite in heart is no more but this, nor is it any thing less than an hearty hypocrite; he is one that is not to the halves, but wholly hypocritical; he that is but half with God (such is the hypocrite) is wholly profane, wholly wicked. The same word which signifyeth an hypocrite signifyeth a profane person, and so we put it in the margin of this text, *The hypocrite, or the profane in heart*. This expression is very paralel with that of the Apostle Paul (Col. 1. 21.) *Ye that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind, by wicked workes, yet now hath he reconciled*. He doth not only call natural men enemies to God, as indeed they all are, (*the wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God*) But he calls them enemies in their minds, that is, such as have a mind to be enemies, or such as have a good will to do evil. So here, an hypocrite in heart is a man heartily hypocritical; whosoever is an hypocrite is an hypocrite in heart; Hypocrisy is that which lyeth at the bottome, it is an heart-sin: though hypocrisy act and vent it self at the tongue, and by the hand, yet all hypocrisy lyeth at the heart; nevertheless, every hypocrite is not (strictly taken) an hypocrite in heart. The hypocrite in heart is opposed to the upright in heart, (Psalm. 92. 11.) The hypocrite in heart hath a heart as full of hypocrisy, as the upright in heart would have hearts full of uprightness. Yet further to characterize the hypocrite in heart,

Take these three considerations to clear it;

First, an hypocrite in heart is one who doth evil, not out of mistake, but out of designe; not because he cannot do otherwise, but because he will not, and is resolved on it; such a sinful piece or such a piece of sinfulness is the hypocrite in heart; he sins as he should love and serve and obey God, with all his heart.

Secondly, as this hypocrite doth evil upon design, so also he doth good with a wicked mind. It is possible for a man to do good unsincerely, or not to be sincere in the doing of it, and yet not to do it with a wicked mind and purpose, or with a base design. There are many who do good, who come to duty, whether in

L 1

family

*Data opera in
pium est.*

family or congregation, who mind not what they do, nor have any love to it, or zeal for it; here is hypocritical attendance, in that they set not themselves to meet with God or find God in the duty; yet possibly such come not with a wicked purpose, nor with a plot in their heads in doing these duties, that's proper to the hypocrite in heart. Thus we may understand that of *Solomon*, lately opened upon another occasion, (*Prov. 21. 27.*) *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord; how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind!* A man may be wicked as to his state, yet not do a thing with a wicked mind, nor bring a sacrifice (which includeth all holy services) with an unholy purpose: but the hypocrite in heart when-ever he doth any good, hath a plot in it; as he alwayes serves God with a reserve, he hath somewhat that he doth with-hold, he cometh by halves, so he alwayes serves God with a design. He may make a fair shew, and a great noise in profession, but ever he hath some end of his own in it. *Jehu* said, *Come see my zeal for God.* He was about a good work, the destroying of *Ahabs* House, and *Baals* Priests, this he called zeal for the Lord; but he did all this with a wicked mind; for the great thing upon his heart was to get into the Throne, to be a King, he made use of all those specious acts of zeal only as a stirrup to raise himself into the saddle, the matter he aimed at was to establish the kingdom of *Israel* to himself and his posterity. That's a second thing; as the hypocrite doth evil purposely, so when he doth good he hath a purpose, a plot in it, more than is good; he doth it not, either for the honour of God, or for the enjoyment of God, which are the best ends of every good action, and without a pure eye, without which no action, how good soever in it self, is good to, or turnes to the good of the actor.

Thirdly, *The hypocrite in heart*, I conceive, is such a one as knows himself to be an hypocrite. There are many hypocrites, who little thinke that they are hypocrites, yea, they may think themselves very upright and honest in what they do; ignorant deluded souls, understand not their own case. *Laodicea* was wretched and miserable, these are false and hypocriticall, but know it not. As some judge, or rather mis-judge themselves hypocrites, who are upright in the maine with God, and honest at heart, (How frequent are such complaints, and self-wronging accusations?)

ons?) So many are hypocrites, or rotten at heart, who know it not. *The heart is deceitfull above all things,* (saith the Prophet Jer. 17. 9.) *and desperately wicked, who can know it?* And among all men, common hypocrites know least of their own hearts. But the hypocrites in heart know their hearts are rotten and false, to what they professe. The politick hypocrite knoweth that, all he doth is but in shew, and that he doth but act a part in Religion, as a Player upon the Stage, when he is most religious; he doth but take a colour, or dye, or paynt himself with Religion, (which is the signification of the word here used in the Hebrew) but is not religious, he doth but put a faire glosse, or disguise upon himself, that he may appear what he is not, or what he knows himself not to be; He knoweth in himself that he is naught, while he would be known by and to others as good. The Apostle speaking of the grievous sufferings of some primitive Christians, saith (Heb. 10. 34.) *They took joyfully the spoyling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they have a better and a more enduring substance;* that is, they knew they were in a present gracious state, and that there remained for them an eternal happy state. Thus also an hypocrite in heart, is one that *knoweth in himself*, or in his heart, that he doth but pretend to be good, and that whatsoever good he doth, it is only in pretence, and is therefore (as the Apostle speaks of the Heretick, Tit. 3. 11.) *condemned of himself*, while he acquits or commends himself never so well to others. Thus it appears how bad, how base the hypocrite in heart is in his best appearances, and how much he excels and bears away the Bel for baseness and badness, I may say, for madness too, from all common hypocrites. Now as they exceed in sin, so they shall in misery, the next words assure us of that; *But she hypocrites in heart*

heap up wrath.

Elihu having described the persons that he dealeth with, or about, he also sets forth both their wofull and sinfull condition: And he doth it three wayes:

First, By what they do; *They heap up wrath.* For a man to be labouring continually only to make heaps of wrath for himself, in what a wofull condition is that man!

Secondly, He shews their bad; both sinfull and wofull condition, by what they will not do; that we have at the latter end of

L 1-2 the

*Induunt pallium
peratū et colo-
res iudicialis;
hec enim est
proprietas va-
dicū דגד, sc:
inficere rem a-
lieno colore, vel
obnubere et ve-
lare alieno pal-
lio.*

the 13th verse, *They cry not when he bindeth them.* They heap up wrath, that they do: *They cry not when he bindeth them;* That they do not.

Thirdly, He sets forth their wofull condition by that which is an inevitable consequent and fruit of such doing, and not doing, the evil which they suffer; that we have (v. 14.) *They die in youth, and their life is among the unclean.* These are the parts of the wofull condition of hypocrites in heart. I shall give a touch upon each of them.

פון איר
Ponunt iram.

First, Consider what they are doing: If you would know their trade, 'tis this; *They are heaping up wrath;* they add wrath to wrath, till they make a mighty masse or heap of it. There is a difference among some interpreters what wrath is here intended. *They heap up wrath.*

Aliqui, ponunt
iram, intelli-
gunt, exaudies-
cunt in deum.
Merci

First, Some conceive that *Elihu* meaneth their own wrath. Hypocrites in heart heap up wrath, that is, when God doth at any time bind them in fetters, and holdeth them in the cords of affliction, as he spake in the former context, these hypocrites in heart, what do they? Do they obey? Do they turn from iniquity? Do they amend their hearts or lives? No; *They heap up wrath,* they grow angry, they vex and rage instead of repenting; that's all these hypocrites do; when the Lord hath bound them in fetters, and holds them in the cords of affliction, they are all in a flame, they are mad with rage and fury. Some both of the Ancients and Moderns, insist upon this opinion, and it is a very great truth, that when the hypocrite in heart is under the hand of God, when God hath him fast in his fetters, his wrath doth boyl, his fury comes up in his face, as it is said (Ezek. 38. 18.) concerning the wrath of God towards his enemies: this fully answers that assertion of *Eliphaz*, (Job 5. 2.) *Wrath killeth the foolish man.* What wrath? his own wrath; he kills himself with vexing and fretting. The hypocrite in heart is a wrathfull man, when things go not right with him. Some have so expounded that (Eph. 2. 3.) *Ye were by nature children of wrath, even as others.* *Children of wrath*, that is, *wrathfull children*; we are full of wrath, full of anger by nature. Though I do not take that to be the sense of the Apostle; but that by *children of wrath*, he means all men as borne under the wrath of God, nor do I conceive this the proper meaning here, though not unusefull. *They heap up wrath*, that is, they grow angry, vexed, and troubled; But Secondly

Secondly, Rather the wrath heaped up, is the wrath of God, which is the most dreadfull thing in the world; and so these words may be expounded by those of the Apostle to an impenitent sinner (Rom. 2. 4, 5.) *Despiseſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance: But after thy hardneſs and impenitent heart treaſureſt up unto thy ſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. To heap up wrath, and, to treaſure up wrath, are the ſame.* The abuſers of the patience and long-suffering of God, are treaſuring up wrath againſt themſelves from day to day; and ſo do the hypocrites in heart, *They heap up wrath.*

Hence Note, Firſt,
The wicked or hypocrites in heart, grow more wicked while the hand of God, his afflicting hand, is upon them.

The more they are under the rod, the more they rebell. I ground it upon this; If they did not heap up ſin, they ſhould not heap up wrath; were they not more vile & wicked under their affliction, there would not be more anger againſt them. It was ſaid of thoſe that would have brought in the captives (which was a very oppreſſing purpoſe, (2 Chro. 28. 13.) ye ſhall not; for *Whereas we have offended againſt the Lord already, ye intend to add more to our ſins & to our treſpaſſe.* Then preſently followeth, *For our treſpaſſe is great, and there is fierce wrath againſt Iſrael.* As if it had been ſaid, If ye do this thing ye will increaſe the wrath of God (which is very fierce already) and blow it up into a conſuming flame. While men grow more and more wicked and vile, God groweth (as to the manifeſtations of wrath) more wrathfull. When we hear of the increaſe of wrath, we may be ſure there hath been a proportionable increaſe of ſin. It is ſaid of Abaz, who was a hypocrite in heart, a very prophane perſon, (2 Chron. 28. 22.) *that in the time of his diſtreſſe he treſpaſſed yet more againſt the Lord, and treſpaſſing more againſt the Lord, he heaped up more of the Lords wrath againſt himſelf: For 'tis added, (v. 23.) He ſacrificed to the gods of Damascus which ſmote him; he got nothing but blows, for his paines, or impious piety in ſerving them: And he ſaid, be-
cauſe the gods of the Kings of Syria help them, therefore will I ſacri-
fice to them, that they may help me.* But what got he by this en-
creaſe

crease of his sin? Surely nothing, but an encrease of wrath; for, it followeth in the same verse, *They were the ruine of him and of all Israel.* God makes new rods, when men make new sins; and he multiplyeth swords, while men multiply transgressions. The more men draw iniquity with cords of vanity, the more they draw misery upon themselves, and are held the faster in the cords of affliction.

Secondly, When 'tis said, *The hypocrites in heart heap up wrath.* We know hypocrites are cunning gamesters, they hope to sin so closely and artificially, that no hurt shall ever come to them by it, yet *The hypocrites in heart heap up wrath.*

Hence Note;

The wiles and policies of hypocrites will availe them nothing;

They shall not avoyd wrath, do what they can; the Lord will find them out. The Apostle saith (*Gal. 6. 7.*) *God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; for he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.* Let hypocrites in heart sow as cunningly as they can, though they seem to sow only good seed, yet they shall reap bad fruit, because they sowed with a bad heart. Hypocrites may deceive men, and heap up their favours to themselves, but they cannot deceive God, who knows their hearts, and will therefore consume them in his wrath, which they have heaped up to themselves.

Thirdly, *Elihu* puts it upon hypocrites in heart to be at this work of heaping up wrath. All impenitent sinners do it, but he puts it upon them especially. All sinners, open professed sinners, that sin and hide it not, that throw up even the very name and profession of Religion, these all heap up wrath; yet they heap up most, and are here spoken of, as the only heapers up of wrath, who are *hypocrites in heart.*

Hence Note;

God is extreemly angry with hypocrites, or the wrath of God doth burn extreemly hot against hypocrites;

He heats the Furnace of his wrath seven times hotter for *hypocrites in heart*, than for ordinary sinners. The Lord (*Isa. 10. 5.*) speaking of the *Assyrian* saith, *The staff in their hand is mine indignation,*

indignation: I will send him against an hypocriticall Nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoyle, and to take the prey, and to tread them down, like the mire in the streets. The Lord put a staff in the hand of that great King of Assyria, and he called it his indignation; it was the Lords indignation which was a staff in the Assyrians hand. But against whom will he send it? That text answers against an hypocriticall Nation; Who are they? the people of his wrath. God hath wrath for all sinners, but the generation of hypocrites are the people of his wrath beyond all other people. None abuse God like hypocrites: For, first, hypocrites carry it towards God, as if he were like the Idols of the Heathen, that have eyes, and see not ears, and hear not, hands, and handle not; feet, and cannot walk: That is, they carry it towards God as if he were but an Idol, satisfied with meer outward shews and services. An Idol finds no fault, nor troubles any for their hypocrisie and false-heartedness: All that is required in the Idols service, is but outside and bodily exercise. Thus the hypocrites deal with God, as if he also would be satisfied and taken up with a little outside service; or as if sacrifice would please him, when his word is disobeyed. (1 Sam. 15. 23.) Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Saul had been very carefull to bring home sacrifices; He had not obeyed the command of God, yet hoped to put him off with a sacrifice. But what were heards and flocks of cattel to be sacrificed, when Saul rebelled against God? Nothing provokes God more than outward services of worship, when they are not accompanied with inward, and universal submission to his will; for that's no better a sacrifice, no purer worship, than a Heathen payes to his Idol-god. Hypocrites offer God only the blind, and the lame, (Mal. 1. 14.) that is, maymed and imperfect services: there is imperfection in the services of the best, but theirs are imperfect services, so imperfect, blind and lame, that they are fit only for the blind, and the lame; so Idol-gods are called, (2 Sam. 5. 8.) And do not they heap the wrath of the true God, who serve him no better than false gods are served, by their Idolatrous Devotionists!

Secondly, There must needs be a continual heaping up of wrath by Hypocrites; for, if not to set the heart right provokes God to wrath, (Psal. 78. 8.) The Lord was exceedingly displeased

pleased with the Israelites, because *they set not their heart aright*. Now if the Lord be so angry when the heart is not set aright, much more must it provoke the Lord, when men do purposely set their hearts wrong, when they do evil knowingly, advisedly, when, as it were, they study to do evil. To do good only in shew, doth more displease the Lord, than the doing of that which in shew is evil, or which is evil above-board, known to be so by all beholders. As Hypocrites often deceive men, so they attempt to deceive God himself. This cannot but heap up wrath, being it self so great a heap of sin. They who think God will be pleas'd with outward Services alone, or have no care to give him inward, are alike displeasing to him. Therefore, among all sorts of sinners, the Lord declares his wrath, and thunders woe upon woe, in the Gospel, against Hypocrites: They have heaped up wrath, and it shall be heaped upon them, *They shall have their Portion in the Lake that burneth with fire and brimstone*. That's the first thing, what they do, *They heap up wrath*. When the hand of God is upon them, they are so far from coming forth humbly and penitentially to turn away his wrath, or to seek his face, that they provoke him more and more, and dreadfully enflame the reckoning against themselves; *They heap up wrath*.

וְיִצְרֵהוּ
pro castigare,
species pro ge-
nero.

Licet hanc do-
ctrinam in com-
muni Elihu
proponat, veri-
simile tamen
est Jobum di-
cendo pungeri.

Secondly, *Elihu* tells us what the *Hypocrites in heart* do not; *They cry not when he bindeth them*. But is it a fault, or so great a fault, not to cry when God bindeth us? Are we commanded or bound to cry, when we are bound in fetters, and holden in cords of affliction? wherein lyeth this sin? That will appear while I shew what crying is here intended.

To cry, is, First, to complain and make a noyse; this is the cry of impatience. Secondly, to mourn and be sorrowful; this is the cry of Repentance. Thirdly, to pray, to supplicate, yea, to pray mightily, to pray strongly; and this is the cry of Faith. (*Luke 18. 7.*) *Shall not God avenge his own Elect, which cry day and night unto him?* That is, which pray mightily to him night and day. The hypocrite in heart often makes the first cry when God bindeth him, the cry of impatience, but never the two latter; he makes not, either the cry of Repentance, or the cry of Faith in Prayer, when God bindeth him. This lets us see the second Part of the wickedness of these hypocrites, 'tis the omission of a most necessary duty, yea of two: They act very sinfully, for
they

they heap up wrath ; they act not holily, for they do not cry when God binds them ; that is, they neither repent nor pray, or they repent not heartily, they pray not earnestly, in the day of their affliction.

Hence note, First ;

Hypocrites humble not themselves, when God humbleth them ;

When he binds them as it were hand and foot, they are tongue-tyed and heart-tyed. The Lord said of such (*Hos. 7. 14.*) *They cryed not unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds; they assemble themselves for Corn and Wine, and rebel against me.* They howled and made a noise, but (saith the Lord) all the while they cryed not to me. There was no Repentance, no Prayer in their cry, they cryed not with their heart. Hypocrites will, first, complain much when God binds them ; secondly, they mur-
mure much when God binds them ; thirdly, they will vex them-
selves like a Bull in a Net, when God binds them ; Fourthly, they will rail and curse when God binds them : but repent, or pray they do not. (*Isa. 8. 21.*) *They shall pass through it hardly beset and hungry ; and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their King and their God, and look upward.* Here was blaspheming, but no crying, no repenting, no praying, no deprecating the hand of God, or the Judgment felt, in an humble and spiritual way. Hypocrites cry not to the Lord, though he makes them cry ; they are readier to find fault with God, than with themselves, in the day of adversity : they neither cry the cry of godly sorrow for their sin, nor the cry of godly Prayers, for help out of their affliction. *They who are false with God in times of Peace, seldom, if at all, repent, or duly apply themselves to God for help in times of trouble ;* the reason is, The Conscience of the hypocrite in heart, tells him, he hath dealt
basely with God ; and therefore, when he is in streights or bound,
what face, what faith, what liberty of spirit, can he have to cry to
God ? Such hypocrites often cry out despairingly, but oh how
rarely are they brought to cry, either believingly or repentingly,
when God bindeth them.

*Antea tur-
pis vita me-
moriam animi
enervat.*

Secondly, Consider this cry a little further, as a Prayer-cry. Hypocrites in heart may be much for prayer in time of prosperity, they were not hypocrites else ; if they did not pray, they were

M m

openly

openly prophane, not hypocrites. Christ speaking of hypocrites, (*Math. 6.*) tells us, they pray much, and (*Math. 7.*) they cry *Lord, Lord.* Hypocrites are much in praying, especially in times of prosperity, yet here he saith, *They cry not when he bindeth them,* that is, in the day of adversity.

Hence Observe ;

That which is not done uprightly, will not be done constantly.

Hypocrites cry to God only in shew at best, and when 'tis best with them ; but when they fall into a troubled condition, they cry not, they even lay down their shew ; they throw up their duties, when they miss their desires. They who have prayed often in a time of prosperity, not throwing away their sins, coming into affliction they throw away their prayers. *Prayer will forsake them, who forsake God while they pray. Such as want Faith, will not have a heart to pray in their wants. If holy Duties cause us not to leave our sins, sinning will at last cause us to throw off our holy Duties.* Will, or doth, the hypocrite pray always ? was *Jobs* denying question, at the 27th Chapter of this Book. *They who do not love prayer, cannot hold out in prayer : They who do not find a sweetness in drawing near to God in good Times, will soon withdraw from him in evil Times.*

Thirdly, *They cry not when he binds them.*

Note ;

Hypocrites, when they have most need of prayer, are least in the use of it.

When more need of Prayer, than in time of affliction ? yet the hypocrite bound in affliction is bound in spirit from supplication.

Fourthly, They are said not to cry, though (in some sense, as hath been shewed) they do cry when God bindeth them.

Hence Note ;

That holy Duty, which is not rightly and holily done, is reckoned by God as not done at all.

What almost is more common among hypocrites, yea, among some prophane ones, than to pray, and desire others to pray for them in time of affliction ? *Pharaoh* will needs have *Moses* pray for

for him; and when *Ahab* was threatned with a binding he humbled himself; yet this goes for nothing, and gets nothing, at most, but what *Ahab* got a reprieve from some present or temporal punishment.

Fifthly, Those words are brought in as an aggravation of the sinfulness of the hypocrite; he doth not cry when God binds him, he prayeth not when God afflicts him.

Hence Note;

It is an heightning of our sin, to neglect prayer in time of affliction.

It is a sin to neglect prayer at any time, but their sin is exceeding sinful, who neglect it then, who cry not to God, when God binds them. Is it not extreamly evil, that they should not pray at all, or but little, when they should be all and alwayes in prayer? Affliction doth, as it were, naturally draw us, yea, forcibly drive us to God. In their affliction they will seek me early (Hol. 5. 14.) As if the Lord had said, If ever they will seek me, surely they will seek me then, and then they will seek me early, that is, earnestly, and with all their hearts. Therefore how unnaturally sinful are they, who in their affliction will not seek God! The Prophet saith (Isa. 26. 16.) *Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them:* Yet the hypocrite will not pray when chastened. How sinful it is, not to pray when God binds us, appears upon many accounts.

First, To neglect prayer in time of affliction, is very sinful, because then we have most occasion for it.

Secondly, In time of affliction God especially calls us to prayer; he commands us at all times, but chiefly then. *Is any among you afflicted?* (is that any mans case?) *let him pray* (Jam. 5. 14.) What should an afflicted man do else? What is he so much engag'd to do by his own necessity, what so much by the will of God, as to pray? Affliction, which takes us off from many other works, sets us upon and about this.

Thirdly, Prayer in time of affliction is under most promises to be heard: Now not to pray, not to cry to God, when we have so many promises to assure us of hearing, encreaseth our sin in the neglect of prayer. Though I do not say, the hypocrites prayer is under these promises of hearing, yet it shall be reckoned as a

sin that he hath not prayed in affliction, because there are so many promises of hearing prayer in affliction. The Lord is very gracious to those that cry in affliction, and the hypocrite hath often heard that he will be so; how wretchedly sinful is he then against God, as well as regardless of his own good, if God hear not of him, or from him, in his affliction! (*Psal. 102. 17.*) *He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer,* that is, graciously accept and answer it. Again (*Psal. 69. 33.*) *The Lord heareth the poor, and despiseth not his Prisoners;* that is, any who are bound in affliction: For I suppose that Text is not to be restrained to those only, who are shut up in prisons, but takes in all those that are bound in any trouble. In which sense the word is used (*Lam. 3. 34.*) *The Lord doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men, to crush under his feet all the Prisoners of the earth:* The Hebrew is, *All the bound of the earth;* by whom, he means, as chiefly the *Jewes* gone into Captivity, who were more properly bound, so any detained under any calamity whatsoever; to all, or any of them, that Scripture is applyable, *The Lord doth not willingly afflict.* Seeing then there are so many promises made to those that cry in affliction, this will be urged upon the hypocrite as an heightning of his neglect, that he hath not cryed when God bound him. Thus we see the second part of these hypocrites misery, by what they do not, *They cry not when he bindeth them.*

The third thing by which the woful misery of hypocrites in heart is set forth, is by what they suffer.

Vers. 14. *They dye in youth, and their life is among the unclean.*

They dye in Youth.

The Hebrew is, *their Soul dyeth.* The Soul, strictly taken, is immortal, and dyeth not; yet 'tis often said in Scripture, *the Soul dyeth;* the Soul being taken, either, First, for the Life; or, Secondly, for the Person. To say, *their Soul dyeth in youth,* is no more than to say (as we translate) *they dye in youth.* The word rendred *Youth*, signifies in the Root of it, *to shake and trouble,* or to make some great concussion; hence some render the Text, *They dye in a Tempest, or in a Storm.* One of the Jewish Doctors gives it thus, *They shall dye with a stroak or shaking;* that is,

בנער

In tempestate:
Vulg. In excus-
sione: Rab.

is, they shall perish by the force and violence of that affliction, which hath arrested and taken hold of them.

But I conceive our reading is clear, *They dye in Youth*, because Youth is the most stirring time of our life, or that time of life, wherein we use the most violent motions without, and are subject to the most violent passions within; therefore the Hebrew expresseth both by one word. Now when we say, *They dye in Youth*, the meaning is, they dye in the prime, in the best, in the most flourishing time of their life, in the spring of their dayes.

But is it true, that all hypocrites in heart dye in youth? Do not many, who discover themselves to be but hypocrites, dye in old age?

I answer, Such-like Scriptures do not intend an universality, as to every individual; but only shew that 'tis so for the most part, or often so. Hypocrites in heart, men of prophane spirits, usually dye in their youth, and are cut off in the Flower of their Age. They who multiply their sins, subtract from their dayes; and they have least ground of hope to live long, who live ill. As bloody, so deceitful men (such are hypocrites in heart) *shall not live out half their dayes.* They who live not out half their dayes, dye in youth. That also is the meaning of *Eliphaz* (Chap. 13. 32.) where he saith, *The wicked man shall have his recompence before his time;* as also when he saith (Chap. 22. 16.) *They were cut down out of time;* that is, before the ordinary time of cutting man down by Death was come. And therefore, I answer,

Secondly, *they die in youth*, needs not be taken in that strictness, as importing that they die before they come to mens estate, but only that they die before the common time of dying. To die in youth signifieth any immature death; or when death cometh suddainly upon any, they may be said to die in youth. Thus here; *they die in youth*, that is, some immature or suddain death overtakes them, they come to an hasty or untimely end, they prolong not their dayes on earth.

Thirdly, this dying in youth may refer to the hypocrites unpreparedness or unfitness to die. Unprepared persons may be said to die in youth, because youths or younger men are usually unprepared to die. Hence that serious *memento* or warning given them (Eccles. 12. 1.) *Remember now thy Creator in the dayes*

Sal. g. d. *Excussione et afflictionum in quibus sunt peribunt.*

of thy youth. Young men are commonly so unprepared to die, that whosoever die unprepared, may be said to die in youth; yea, though they die in old age, *they die infants*. I may say at least in allusion to that of the Prophet (possibly it may be a proof of what I say) *Isa. 65. 20.*) *An old man that hath not filled his dayes* (by being good and doing good) *dieth a child*. As a child may be said to die an hundred years old, when he dies full of grace, so a man of an hundred years old, may be said to die a child, an infant, when he hath no grace; for though he hath been long in the world, yet he can hardly be said to have lived at all. So then, how long soever the hypocrite in heart hath had a being on the earth, and a breathing in the air, he alwayes dieth in youth, or before his time, because he hath not yet learned the way to eternal life.

Moritur cum
Juventa. Jun.
Ponitur 2

pro DY ut cap.

9. 26. Psal.

143. 7. Pisc.

Æque morien-

tur &

paii iudicio

Dei conteren-

tur atque juve-

niles illi animi

qui proterve

obnituntur Deo,

& palam ad

omne fugitium

profecti sunt.

Jun.

Ut hic vita

mori dicitur,

sic Authores

Latini dicunt

vita vivere &

vitam vivere;

vita moritur,

cum homo vi-

tam cum morte

commutat.

Drus.

Vita eorum

(suppleo) au-

feritur. Pisc.

There is yet another reading of the words; we say, *they die in youth*, that saith, *they die with youth*, or *young men*; that is, as dissolute, deboylt, vicious and riotous young men die, so hypocrites die. The hypocrite is opposed to the outwardly profane in his life, but he shall be like him in his death: As if *Elihu* had said, look as vain voluptuous youths, carnal youths, or young men, who give themselves up to their pleasures, look as or how they die, look what wrath is upon them when they die, even so shall the hypocrites in heart die, *they die with the youth*. I shall touch this further upon the last clause, where *Elihu* gives us this sence in other words, and in words that more fully reach this sence; for having said, *they die in (or with) youth*, he thus concludes,

And their life is among the unclean.

Here it may be queried; forasmuch as he said before, *they die in youth*, how doth he here say, *Their life is among the unclean*? what life have they when dead? I answer, By *their life*, we may understand that life which hypocrites in heart shall have after death; which may be taken two wayes. First, for the life of the soul, while the body remains a consuming or consumed carcass in the grave, that life (after death) the life of their soules is among the unclean. Secondly, for the life which they shall have after the resurrection of their bodies, that will be among the unclean too. Some translate the words thus, *Their life is taken away among the unclean*; we say, *their life is among the unclean*.

clean. The word (*is*) is not in the original text, and we may make the supply by a word signifying *to take away*; Their life, is taken away among the unclean, that is, they shall die like the worst of sinners, they shall make no better an end, than the unclean and profane, no better than the most foul and filthy Sodomites, as the original imports. For

The word which we render *unclean*, hath a double, yea, a contrary signification, holy and unholy, clean and unclean. *They who are holy only in name, are most unholy in heart and life.* The Scripture often by the same word expresseth things of utmost opposition; so here he calleth those who are most unholy, by a word which signifieth holiness; the Hebrew saith, *their life is among the Sodomites.* Mr. Broughton translates, *and their life with fornicators.* Sodomites, who are the most unclean and filthy sinners, worse than fornicators, are expressed by a word, by this word which also signifieth holy, or *holy ones* (Deut. 23. 17.) *There shall not be a Sodomite, or, an holy one among you*; and therefore as we read of Sodomites in the land, who are sinners against the law of nature, (1 Kings 14. 24.) so according to that law of Moses, we read, 1 Kings 15. 12. and Chapter 22. 46. as also 2 Kings 23. 7. of the destroying of the houses of the Sodomites, and of the removing of Sodomites out of the land. Sodomites being the most abominable of all unclean ones, how unclean are they whose life is among them, or whose life is taken away with them! The Spirit of God doth rightly compare hypocrites to Sodomites and filthy persons, because it proceeds from the heart of some base lust or other that any are hypocrites. 'Tis proper to those who are magnanimous, or of noble spirits, to be open, clear-hearted and ingenious.

Their life is with the unclean.

Hypocrites have a great affectation to be numbered among the clean and holy, and possibly they have been, or may be, high in the opinion of men, for holiness, for very Saints; *But their life shall be among the Sodomites, or the unclean.* It being a shame to express the abomination of that sort of sinners by a word proper to them, the Scripture (by an Euphemisme) calls them *holy*; we translate the Scripture sense, and call them *unholy or unclean*; *Their life is among the unclean, among Sodomites.* Thus as the death

Cum merito-
riis. Pisc.

Latini va-
cua-
cinados & ja-
thicos qui in
concubitis libi-
dinoso vice mu-
lieris fungun-
tur. Id.

בְּקִרְוָם
Duo contraria
significat san-
ctum & profa-
num pollutum,
scortatorem.
Recte simula-
tores effemi-
nati comparat,
quia ex pravi-
tate animi con-
tingit, quod ho-
mines sint simu-
latores; est e-
nim proprium
magnanimit effe-
manifestum.
Aquinas.

death of the hypocrite here is fully expressed in the former words, *He shall die with the youth*, that is, like those sinful Sodomitish youths, like those youths who live in the heat of abominable lusts, though he seemed to have an heat of holiness; so their life hereafter is fully expressed in these latter words, *Their life is with the unclean*. This clearly sets forth hypocrites, they are spiritual adulterers, they pretend love to Christ as their husband, but their hearts go a whoring after the world. And therefore as their life was really in this world, though they pretended otherwise, so it shall be visible in the world to come, *among the unclean*.

Hence Note ;

First, *They who are like the unclean in this life, shall be wrapped up with them in the next life after death, or in the second death.*

They who live like the wicked shall dy like the wicked, and live with them, if theirs may be called a life, for evermore. The hypocrite, with all his varnish and fair colours, shall not die like a godly man, nor live with him after death; though he hath lived the life of a godly man, as to appearance, yet he shal not die so, nor live so when the dead rise: he shal die and live like and among his own company, the unclean. He was secretly unclean in his life, and he shall openly live among the unclean, when he dyes. *Balaam* a Sorcerer, a Witch, a false Propheer, how did he beg, *that he might die the death of the righteous, and that his last end might be like his!* (*Num. 23. 14.*) The hypocrite would fain die like those whom he hath imitated and made a shew of all the dayes of his life; But did *Balaam* dy like the righteous? no, he dyed, as he lived, like one that had loved the wages of unrighteousness. Though hypocrites have lived in reputation with godly and good men, yea, have been reputed godly and good men, yet when they die they shal go down among the unclean, even among the debauched and filthy Sodomites, they shal go to their own place and to their own company. It is said of *Judas* when he hanged himself (*Acts. 1. 25*) *He went to his own place*, his proper place. All things naturally tend to that which is congeniall or like to them; heavy things downward, light things upward. What place is congenial to, what place is the center of wicked men? Surely Hell, the bottomless pit is their own place, and that's the meaning of the text there. *Judas* was a great while among the Apostles in an high place, in a very excellent place

ἐν τῷ τόπῳ
τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ.

place, he went like an Apostle, or for an Apostle; but that was not his *owne place*; he was an hypocrite, and when he dyed then he went to his *owne place*, to that place which was proper to him. In this life good and bad are mingled together in the same place; the hypocrites and the sincere may be in one House, in one Congregation, in one Church, in the purest Church on earth there may be hypocrites in heart as well as sincere; but when hypocrites die they shall be divided from all those with whom they were never truly, or in heart, united. If it were possible, all the godly or sincere should be in one place as to spirituals here (that's most comely and desirable, though not attainable) yet we cannot make the separation perfect in this life; but at death it will be done perfectly; death will not leave one hypocrite among the sincere, nor a weed among the herbs, nor a chaff in the floor; death will make perfect separation; after death all the holy shall be gathered together into one society, and all the unholy into another society by themselves. It is said of Abraham he *was gathered to his people* (Gen. 25. 8.) Not only to his kindred, in the flesh, but to all those that were of his faith. Death will gather all to their proper place and company. Godly *Josiah* was gathered to his fathers (2 Chron. 34. 28.) and the wicked are said (Psal. 49. 19.) *to go to the generation of their fathers, where they shall never see light*. Death will send every one to his *owne*. The hypocrite shall no more shuffle himself among the righteous, nor Satan himself, nor any of his Sons, among the Sons of God; every man shall be for ever among his like.

Further note;

The smoothest-faced and closest hypocrite in the world shall fare as bad or no better then the foulest and debaystest sinner;

They shall die with the vile, and be taken away among the unclean. The fairest hypocrite, shall have no more esteem with God, then the foulest Sodomite that ever was in the world. Christ saith, if any refuse to receive the Gospel, it shall be worse with them then with *Sodom*, the cry of whose sins went up to heaven; nor shall it be any whit better, but rather worse, with them who receive the Gospel of Christ only in shew, their hearts not being right with him. How woful is their present condition, who daily heap up wrath, who (in the sense opened) die in or with youth, and whose life (after death) is among the unclean!

J O B , Chap. 36. Vers. 15, 16, 17.

15. *He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ear in oppression.*

16. *Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait into a broad place, where there is no straitness, and that which should be set on thy table, should be full of fatness.*

17. *But thou hast fulfilled the judgement of the wicked : judgement and justice take hold on thee.*

E *Libu* having shewed how terrible God will be, how dreadfully he will deal with subtil hypocrites ; *The hypocrites in heart heap up wrath* ; proceeds in this context to do two things further.

First, that he might raise some hope in *Job*, if he did at last humble himself, he repeats the gracious dealings of God with humble and upright-hearted ones at the 15th verse ; I say he repeats it, because he had spoken of it before (*vers. 6, 7.*) and this is a very useful and profitable repetition, by which *Job* is doubly admonished to raise himself from his despair of a better condition ; forasmuch as God doth not afflict with a purpose to destroy, but that he may heal and help the afflicted. The greatest design of God in chastening us should be alwayes remembred, that he intends only our good, especially to make us thereby better or more partakers of his holiness.

Secondly, he makes application of the whole doctrine to *Job* ; and that two wayes ; First, by way of consolation, assuring him he had been delivered in case he had humbled himself duly & deeply before the Lord (*v. 16.*) *Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait into a large place, &c.* Secondly, he applies it by way of conviction, that as yet surely he was unhumbled, because still under the afflicting hand of God, *vers. 17.* *But thou hast fulfilled the judgement of the wicked, judgement and justice take hold on thee.* So much concerning the state of these three verses in general ; I shall now go on to open them in order.

Vers.

Verse 15. *He delivereth the poor in his affliction, or he pulls the poor out of affliction;*

That is the sense of the word, and the work of God. We find the word used to signify the pulling or drawing off of the shoe, (Deut. 25. 19.) As the shoe is tied or buckled to the foot, and must be loosed before it can with any ease be drawn off; so afflictions are tyed to us, till the Lord unlooseth and draweth them off from us, or us from them. To draw out of trouble, or to draw us out of trouble, is deliverance. David expresseth himself by that word (Psal. 6. 4.) *Return, O Lord, deliver (or draw) my soul* (that is *me*) *out of the enemies hand, or out of the trouble which compasseth me about, and is ready, like deep waters, to swallow me up. He delivereth*

שׁוֹבֵר
Trazit, extrahit, detrahit, empiet extrahit, extrahit, mi-
seria, ericulo.
Chalaz and lacha. 7 two contraries, save and undoe, are sweetly used y Elihu in this verse. Brough.

The poor in his affliction.

Who are meant by the poor, hath been shewed before, I shall not stay upon it here, only consider, there are poor as to their outward state, and poor as to their inward state, that is, first, poor in spirit, which is a blessed poverty; and secondly, poor in spirituals, which is a miserable poverty. The two former sorts of poor especially, when joyned in one, are here intended; *He delivereth the poor*

in his affliction, or, in his poverty.

There is a great elegancy in the Hebrew text; tis a word of the same root which signifieth the poor who are delivered, and the affliction in which or out of which he or they are delivered. We may translate the text thus; *he delivereth the poor in his poverty*; that is, when he is in his poverty or affliction, the Lord delivereth him out of his poverty, or affliction; if poverty be his affliction, or whatsoever affliction comes under the name of poverty, the Lord delivereth him out of it. I have upon other passages of this book spoken of this deliverance, yet shall touch it here again, because we ought always to remember it; we are often in affliction, often in trouble, and therefore we have need often to be put in mind, and continually to bear in mind, that God is a deliverer, the deliverer of his people from, or out of afflictions; *He delivereth the poor in his affliction.*

עני בעני
Est vox conjuga-
ta, pauperum
a paupertate,
miserum a mi-
seria. Pined.

Hic 2 redditur
per ב de, ex.

Hence Note,

Deliverance is the work of God.

As the poor cannot deliver themselves in affliction, so neither can the rich deliver the poor by his riches, nor the strong by his power, nor the wise man by his wisdom, craft or policy. The Lord often useth the help of man, creature help, in delivering the poor out of afflictions; yet the whole effect is here, and every where in Scripture attributed to God, *He delivereth the poor.* Deliverance of any sort is of God, yet more especially some sort of deliverances are; as *Nebuchadnezzar* confessed (*Dan. 3. 29.*) who, when those three Worthies were delivered out of the fiery furnace, made a decree, that every People, Nation and Language which spake any thing amiss, against the God of *Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego*, should be cut in pieces, &c. and he did it upon this ground, because (saith he) there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. He had an opinion that his god could deliver, but he appropriated the glory of that deliverance to their God; there is no god can deliver after this sort; no god but the God of *Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego* can check and stop the rage of fire, and bring out those unburnt, who are cast into the burning. That's the first thing, *Deliverance is of the Lord.*

Secondly, *He delivereth the poor.*

Note;

The lowest and meanest are the objects of deliverance.

When it's worst with us, then usually God cometh in. *He will be seen in the Mount*, and provide at a pinch; he loves to do for us when we can do nothing for our selves. Take the poor in any notion, but especially for such as being destitute of all help and means of deliverance, are also poor in spirit, not trusting to any help or humane arm, these, these are the persons whom the Lord delights to deliver; and therefore God is so often spoken of in Scripture, as espousing the cause and quarrel of the *Widow* and the *Fatherless*.

Thirdly, From the manner of expression, *He delivereth the poor in affliction*,

Note;

Note ;

They who are not delivered from affliction, may yet be delivered in affliction.

God doth not alwayes deliver his People from affliction (either not suffering affliction to fall upon them, or presently bringing them out of affliction) but he is engaged (by promise) to deliver them in affliction ; and this he doth sometimes by checking the affliction, that it shall not hurt them ; sometimes by enabling them to bear, yea, to conquer the affliction, how much soever it hurts them. He delivered those in the third of *Daniel*, in the fiery furnace, by checking the fire that it should not hurt them ; and *Daniel* in the Lions den, by checking the hungry Lyons that they did not devour him. He delivered *Job*, and *David*, and *Jeremie*, and the Apostles, and all the Martyrs, who loved not their lives to the death for the testimony of Jesus, by causing them to glory in, and triumph over all their tribulations. *He delivereth the poor in his affliction,*

and openeth their ears in oppression.

What's meant by opening the ear, was shewed at the 10th verse of this Chapter, and at the 16th verse of the thirty third ; Yet consider somewhat in the words anew.

And openeth their ear. The Hebrew copulative particle, which we render, *and*, is often in that language used to denote a season, or special time, and then it is rendred by *when* ; thus here he delivereth the poor in affliction, *when he hath opened their ears, by or in oppression.* Thus also (*Psal. 139. 16.*) *Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.* The Hebrew is, *and not one in them* ; as if he had said, God had a full Idea or platform of *Dauids* body before it was framed ; so here, *he delivereth the poor in affliction, and openeth, or when he hath opened their ears in oppression ; that is, taught them effectually to make a good use of their afflictions.* We may also render it, *after* ; so the copulative (*Van*) is expounded (*Lev. 17. 15. Jer. 10. 13.*) Thus here ; *He delivereth the poor in affliction after he hath opened their ears ; that is, after he hath made them understand that sin hath caused their sufferings, and hath al-*

Faciet eum intelligere quod pro peccatis puniatur. Aquina

so

so made them obedient and ready to receive counsel from him, as that phrase of *opening the ear* hath been opened. *He openeth, or when or after he hath opened their ears*

בלחץ
a radice
צוץ
coarctavit,
pressit, com-
pressit, vin in-
tulit praeposito,
in sepe valet,
per.

in oppression, or by oppression,

The word notes, extream oppression; we read it (*Num. 22. 25.*) in the story of *Balaam*, where 'tis said, his Ass eushed (or pressed, or oppressed) his foot against the wall, while he was going to curse the people of *Israel*, that so *Balak* might oppress them. This word is used also *Judg. 4. 3. 1 Sam. 10. 18.* and by it *Elisha* shewed how he would have *Jehorams* messenger handled (*2 Kings 6. 32.*) Oppression takes fast hold. The Lord takes fast hold of sinners by oppression, and will not let them go till he hath opened their ears; but as soon as he hath opened their ears in or by their oppressions, then (out of hand) he delivereth them in, if not out of their afflictions. From the connection of this with the former part of the verse,

Observe;

The evil of oppression or trouble is preparatory to, or a usual means to fit us for our receiving of good.

He delivereth them in affliction, when he hath opened their ears in or by oppression. When once the soul by hearing the cry of the oppressor is made obedient to the call of God, then God comes and workes deliverance. Good men, while free from evil, are oftentimes like the wilde ass described in the 39th chapter of this book; such as will not hear nor regard the crying of the driver, though he be not an exactor, (as the word there signifies and we put in the Margine) but a fair and gentle driver. Few hear when spoken to, till they feel as well as hear; and therefore the Lord first sends them in o trouble, that they may hear, and having by that means opened their eares to hear, he brings them out of trouble. When we are truly humbled by affliction, we are near deliverance from affliction. The plaister must be kept on till the wound be healed. The Lord will not leave off scourging or correcting his people till he hath brought them to such a posture, that they are fit for mercy. The Lord helps and heals those who submit; and if they whom he hath bound with the cords of affliction, call humbly for release and relief, he will not forsake them, but

but restore them in due time to their former felicity; *He delivereth the poor in affliction, when he hath opened their eares in or by oppression.*

Elihu having laid down this general Doctrine, makes Application of it in the two verses following;

Verf. 16. *Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait into a broad place.*

Thus *Elihu* proceeds from the general Thesis or assertion of Gods deliverance, to the Hypothesis, accommodating the Doctrine to *Jobs* Case and Person, *Even so he would have removed thee, &c.*

This 16th verse contains the first part of the Application made to *Job*, where *Elihu* informs him what the issue would undoubtedly have been, if he had submitted (which he did not) as he ought, to the afflicting hand of God, and had not (which he did and ought not) filled his mouth and the eare of God with bitter complaints, nor stood so stiffly upon his own defence and vindication. This *Elihu* doth by a double allusion.

First, to the bringing of a man out of close prison into a state of freedom, or into an open air. This he gives us in the former part of the verse, *even so would he have removed thee out of the strait into a broad place.*

Secondly, he doth it by alluding to the furnishing of a mans table with store, not only of wholesome but of delicious meates, who before fared very hardly. This he doth in the close of the verse, *and that which should be set on thy table, should be full of fatness.* As if he had said, if thou hadst harkened to the voice of God, thou shouldst have had both liberty, and plenty, hadst thou been bettered by thy troubles, it had been better for thee, and much better with thee; thou hadst been enlarged fully, thou hadst been supplied abundantly with all manner of good things desirable, even to the utmost of thy desires: that's the general scope of this verse; more particularly.

Even so would he have removed thee out of a strait into a broad place. Some read the verse with a retro-respect, or as looking back to the time past; as if *Elihu* had bid *Job* remember his former experiences, whether God heretofore dealt not bountifully with him. To this sense (besides others) *Mr. Broughton* translates, which
hath

Sic etiam a-
 2 extera te
 ab ore angu-
 stie in latitu-
 dinem, cui non
 suberat pressu-
 ra & forculum
 mensae tuae ple-
 num erat pin-
 guedine. Jun.

NOT
 est proprie in-
 citare, sere ad
 malum, a radice
 riuo

Ex eadem ra-
 dike varie lo-
 quutiones & in-
 terpretationes
 pullulant.
 Pined.

hath turned thee from distresses mouth, to largeness, where is no strait-
 ness, and that which was laid upon thy table was full of fatness: and he
 gives the gloss upon his own translation thus; God once made thee
 wealthy, and would again; thou hast had experience how good
 a master, and how liberal the Lord is to those that serve him,
 thou thy self didst enjoy prosperity a long time farre from all
 trouble, or touch of affliction. Thus, (I say) some refer the words
 to the time past; but I rather keep to our own translation, which
 expresseth the original text, as an assurance of what Job should
 have had, and might have expected in time, had he complied as he
 ought, with the purpose of God in his afflictions.

Even so would he have removed thee out of a strait into a broad
 place. As if he had said, God who useth and loveth to deliver the poor
 out of affliction, would also have delivered thee out of thy affliction
 hadst thou been humbled under thy affliction, hadst thou fallen down
 before him, hadst thou submitted the matter to him, and not disputed
 it with him as thou hast done, hadst thou confessed his justice, and not
 accused it or complained about it, even so would he have removed
 thee, &c. The word which we translate to remove, signifieth also

To move or to perswade; because he that perswades ano-
 ther, moveth or removeth him from his opinion or intendment,
 or from what his practise was before, and brings him to be or do
 somewhat that he did not, or was not, before. To be perswaded
is to be inwardly moved, to be moved in mind: And therefore
 they who perswade or entice others to evil, are said to turn them
 from the Lord, and to thrust them out of the way which the Lord
 commandeth them to walk in (Dent. 13. 5.) To perswade in
 any degree, is to move (Josh. 15. 18.) and some perswade so
 strongly, that they make in others great removes.

Further, It signifies to deceive, as will appear if you compare
 Text and Margin; 2 Kings 18. 32. and those Texts, 2 Chron.
 32. 11, 15. all concerning one matter. He that is deceived, is
 usually deceived by perswasion, and is drawn away by some en-
 ticements.

Now, because he that perswadeth or deceiveth another, en-
 deavoureth to turn or remove him from what he holdeth or inten-
 deth, to the contrary, therefore (as we render) this word signi-
 fies also to remove, to bring from one place to another, or from
 one

one state to another. *He would have removed, or translated thee*

Out of a freight into a broad place.

Here are two sorts of places, a freight, and a broad place: What a freight place, properly taken, is, all know. The Hebrew is, *He would have removed thee out of the mouth of the freight.* The Septuagint render, *He would have removed thee out of the mouth of the enemy.* An enemy puts us to freights; and therefore the same word signifies a freight and an enemy: *he would have removed thee out of a freight place*; the hand of an enemy is so. But more generally, by the *freight place*, we are to understand any kind of tribulation or trouble whatsoever. Troubles of any sort are justly called freights, for they inclose and imprison us, they abridge us of our liberty, they ty us short up, where we can scarce stir or breath. A man in trouble, is a man in freights. Some expound these words allegorically, taking the *mouth of the freight* for Hells mouth; they that descend thither, are indeed in everlasting freights; for, though *Tophet be deep and large*, as the Prophet speaks (*Isa. 30. 33.*) yet all that are there, are in freights. Hell is large to take in, but freight to let out, so freight, that it will not let one out for ever. Others expound it tropologically, or with respect to manners; *he would have delivered thee out of the mouth of the freight*, that is, from the power of thy sins and corruptions, for they indeed are freights; and though we easily fall into them, yet we hardly get out, or free of them again. But we need not take up, either Allegories, or Tropologies; the words are plain. That which *Elihu* here intends by *freights*, is great trouble, deep misery, into which a man being cast, knows neither how to subsist, nor how to escape. Yet out of that *freight place* he promiseth deliverance; *He would have removed thee out of a freight*

Into a broad place;

That is, to liberty and prosperity; which are in Scripture compared to a broad place, where a man hath room enough. *Thou hast known my Soul in adversity.* (saith David, *Psal. 31. 7, 8.*) and *thou hast set my feet in a large Room*, that is, in a prosperous condition. Thus *Elihu*

O. o

here

Angustia
et adversarius.
Hinc Septua-
ginta reddunt,
in squaros
expu.

Gehenna est
ampla ad reci-
piendum, et an-
gusta ad emit-
tendum.

De puteo pec-
cati et pravæ
consuetudinis,
cuius ingressus
facilis exitus
præ-angustus.
Gregor.

Or ang stia
est ingens ca-
lamitas, aby-
sus mælerum, in
quam demersus

homo, neq; sub-
sistere, neq; e-
mergere potest.

here promieth on Gods behalf, *He would have removed thee out of a streight, into a large place,*

Where no streightness is ;

Spatium latum est, ino latissimum, ubi nullum angustia est. That's a broad place indeed. *No streightness* implyeth greatest enlargement, or enlargement to the uttermost, not only of need, but desire. *A broad place, where there is no streightness,* is full liberty, or fill of liberty. A man may be in a very good, in a very free condition, and yet have some streights. To be in so good a condition, as to have no streights at all, is the top and perfection of freedom. And surely, The full attainment of such an enlargement, is the reward of the next life, not the enjoyment of this life.

Via impiorum est lata angustissime ; via iustorum est angusta latissime, et definit in latitudinem iacuosissimam.

The way of the wicked, in this life, is most streightly broad ; the way of the righteous, in this life, is broadly streight, and endeth in a broadness of everlasting blessedness. God at last will remove all his out of a streight, into a broad place, where there is no streightness. Hence,

First, See, the Author of our deliverance is again here remembered, *He would have removed &c.* As before, *he delivereth the poor in afflictions,* so here again, *He would have removed thee out of a streight, into a broad place.* **As all our mercies are of the Lord, so let us acknowledge him in all.**

Secondly, From the Allusion, Note ;

Troubles are streights.

He is in a streight, that knows not what to do ; thus 'tis often with us in our troubles. It was so with good *Jehoshaphat* (2 Chro. 20. 12.) when a mighty Enemy came up against him, *Lord* (said he) *we know not what to do, but our eyes are towards thee ;* he was in a streight, what to do here on earth, but he had a broad place to look to, even to heaven, to the Lord of heaven and earth, *our eyes are towards thee.* As if he had said, *Lord we are in a streight, but thou art never in streights ; Lord counsel us what to do, Lord help us to do it.* The afflicted, many a time, *know not what to do,* and many times, they cannot do what they know ; they know this thing would do them good, but they cannot do it, they know, that might be helpfull to them, but they cannot reach it.

He is in a streight that doubts what good to chuse, much more is he in a streight who seeth that what-ever he chuseth, he must chuse

chuse some evil. *Paul* was in the former streight, and *David* in the latter: *Paul* was in a streight, it was a trouble to him, being doubtfull, which good to chuse, (*Phil. 1. 23.*) *I am in a streight betwixt two*; betwixt what two? betwixt two very good things, namely, living here in doing good, and going to heaven to receive his reward; he was in a streight whether to live here to do more work, or to go to heaven to receive the reward of his work. 'Tis some trouble, but a blessed trouble, when we are in a doubt which good to chuse. But they are in very great trouble, who are in such a streight, that whatsoever they chuse, they must chuse evil: That was *Dauids* streight, (*2 Sam. 24. 14.*) the Lord gave him a choyce, and a very sad one, of three evils, either of famine, or of pestilence, or of flying and falling before his Enemies; here-upon *David* said, *I am in a great streight*; somewhat he must chuse, and what-ever he chose, it was evil, that is, penal evil; but seeing it was so, and could not be otherwise, (*e malis minimum*) he would chuse the least, he chose to fall into the hand of God, rather than into the hands of men. Into such kind of streights are the people of God sometimes cast, they have somewhat before them to chuse, but what-ever they chuse, it is very hard, and troublesome; troublesome to stay, and troublesome to go, troublesome to abide by it, and troublesome to flie from it, every way it is a trouble; and how many of the precious people of God have been brought into these troubles! Only this is their comfort as well as their duty, that though they may be in such streights as necessitate them to chuse a lets good, or a penal evil, yet as God will not, so man cannot bring them into any such streights as necessitate them to chuse a moral or finial evil. Troubles are streights. He would have removed thee out of a streight into a broad place.

Hence Note, Thirdly;

What-ever streights we are in, God is able to enlarge us.

The hand of the Lord is not shortned that it cannot save, (*Isa. 59. 1.*) There is no streight so strict, but the Lord can open it, and remove us out of it, or it from us. When the Children of *Israel* were in that great streight, having the Sea before them, and *Pharaoh* with his Host behind them, the Lord removed them out of that streight, and brought them into a large place. There are a

*Dum deum ve-
lit misereri quia
bonus est. Et
passus quia om-
nipotens est: ip-
se contra se di-
vine pietatis
inimam clau-
dit, qui deum
sibi aut non
velle aut non
posse misereri
credit. Au-
gust. Ser. 88.
de Temp.*

thousand instances and experiences of this. *David saith, (Psalm 130. 1.) Out of the depths have I cryed unto thee O Lord:* The depth there, and streight here, are the same under several Allusions. *David* cryed out of the depth of misery: when he was at the bot-
tome of the pir, he cryed unto God, and was delivered. We can be in no depth, but the power and mercy of God can reach a hand to us, and draw us out; we can be in no streight, but the power of God can, and his love will make roome for us, that we may e-
scape. Seeing then (as one of the Ancients speaks fully to this
poynt) *God will help because he is so merciful, and can because he is*
so powerful, that man shuts the doore of hope against himself, who
thinks, or through unbelief fears, that either God will not or cannot
help him. And therefore when at any time we are in a streight,
let the greatness of our streights, be the exercise of our faith, not
a discouragement to it. Some make their streights a stop to their
faith, they cannot believe they shall be delivered out of great
streights; but the greatness of our streights, should quicken, not
deaden our faith, it should encrease our faith, not weaken it; and
so it will, if we consider who it is that undertakes to remove his
people out of their streights; it is the great God; and the more
their streights are, the greater their difficulties are, the greater is
his glory in removing any of them into a large place. 'Tis said in
the Psalm, *The Lord makes a way for his anger;* he doth do so
sometimes, he makes a broad way for his anger; yet remember
he makes a way for his love and mercy too, that his great power
may be seen in opening our greatest streights.

Fourthly, Whereas, 'tis not only said, *He would remove thee*
into a large place, but, *into a large place, where there is no streight-*
ness.

Observe;

God can bring his afflicted people perfectly out of streights, and set
them out of the reach of danger.

Our comforts in this world are usually mixed with sorrows, our
enlargements with streights; yet the Lord is able to give us sor-
rowless comforts, and such enlargements as shall not have the
least shadow of a streight in them. As Jesus Christ saith us to
the uttermost of soul-streights, or we are saved through Christ to
the uttermost of our sins, that is, of our guilt and danger of con-
demnation.

demnation by sin; so he can save us also to the uttermost of outward troubles, he can give a perfect temporal salvation, such a salvation as shall have nothing of feare or danger in this life: *Elihu* speaks of such a salvation. The Lord can save us to the uttermost of present perils, and set us beyond the reach of peril, even in such a place, where there shall be no feare, no suspicion of annoyance.

'Tis said (*Pro. 10. 22.*) *The blessing of the Lord maketh rich, and he giveth no sorrow with it.* The Lord makes some men rich, or gives them a great estate, yet they find sorrow enough with it; but the Lord, through his blessing, can give riches, and add no sorrow with it, put no gravell in our bread, nor gall in our cup, but all shall be sweet to us; that's bringing us into a large place, where there is no present streightness, no, nor appearing caule to feare any. Thus the Nations are brought in rejoycing at the fall of *Babylon*, (*Isa. 14. 7, 8.*) *The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet, they break forth into singing, yea the fir-trees rejoyce at thee, and the Cedars of Lebanon, saying, since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.* The Lord will work full deliverance for his people by *Babylons* fall; when that falls, *Sion* shall not feare the coming of any more fellers, *Christ* will then give his faithfull people such enlargement as shall know no streights.

This is the first allusion; *He would have removed thee out of the streight into a broad place, where there is no streightness*; it followeth,

And that which should be set on thy Table, should be full of fatness.

Here's the second mercy. As if he had said, *The Lord would not have given thee a bare deliverance out of evil, but thou shouldst have received abundance of good*; thou shouldst not only have roome enough, but comfort enough;

That which should be set on thy Table, should be full of fatness.

Some render, *That which resteth, or abideth on thy Table*; that is, thy meate, and thy drink, thy wine, and thy oyle, that which thou feedest upon, should be of the best and most nourishing, not bare commons, not ordinary fare, but

Positio vel requies. Heb: a radice *וְיָשׁוּב* quod est requiescere Metonymia adjuncta. Pisc.

*Est abstractum pro concreto, positio & requies, pro tisque si per mensam deponuntur a seculariis; Quomodo modum jumenta vocantur, servitus hominum, quia hominibus servant. Bold: Vicine sunt radices *וְיָשׁוּב* quiescit & *וְיָשׁוּב* positum; quod enim ponitur in aliquo loco, ponitur ut requiescat. Merc:*

Full

Full of fatness.

Fatness is put in Scripture to express the best of things; it often signifieth the best of spiritual things, (*Psal. 36. 8.*) *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house.* The house of God is the Church of God, and, *God keeps a good house*, there are fat things, and they who worship and wait upon him, they shall have abundance of them, their full satisfaction: the fatness of Gods house, is the riches of Grace, the best of Gospel-Ordinances and promises, the best of Gospel-comforts and mercies, these are the fatness of the house of God; these are the things which the Apostle intended while he told the Gentiles, (*Rom. 11. 17.*) *That they were partakers of the root and fatness of the Olive tree.* Thus also spake the Prophet, (*Isa. 25. 6.*) *In this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make a feast of fat things*: what, of such fat things as the Epicures of the world surfer upon, Sheep, and Oxen, &c? no; the *feast of fat things* which the Lord will make to his people is of spiritual things, they shall have much of Christ, much of grace here, and an assurance of glory for hereafter; *This is the feast of fat things.* And though the Lord give to any of his servants the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction; though the fig-tree should not blossome to them, though they should have neither Sheep in the fold, nor Calves in the stall, yet they may daily sit at this feast of fat things, and be filled with joy in the Lord, (*Hab. 3. 17, &c.*)

And as fatness is used in Scripture to express the best of spiritual things, so fatness expresseth the best of natural and outward good things, (*Psal. 65. 11.*) *Thou crownest the year with thy goodness, and thy paths drop fatness*; that is, plenty, and plenty of the best things, which grow out of the earth by the blessing and benigne influences of Heaven. I conceive spiritual good things, the best of them, are also shadowed under these expressions of Temporal.

Further, *Elihu* doth not only say, *That which shall be set upon thy Table shall be fat*, but, *full of fatness*; which implyeth thus much. Thou shalt have whatsoever may make thy life comfortable, and happy; for as by bread, our *dayly bread*, we are to understand all the necessities of this life (though bread be the meanest part of our sustenance, yet it is called the *staff of life*, because the most necessary part of it) so by *fatness*, we are to understand all things delicate

*Laetissime suavis-
simèq; vi-
ves.*

delicate and delicious; and those things which are most delicate and delicious, are said to be *full of fatness*.

Hence Note;

First, God, who delivereth his people from trouble, or out of streights, can also fill and furnish them with comforts.

The mercy of God doth not only take away evil, and so leave us, it doth not only bring us out of our streights, and there set us down; but mercy proceeds to the bestowing of good upon us. As we in obedience should not put off the Lord with abstaining from evil, but ought to do good, even abundance of good, and not only bring forth good, but much good fruit; that's our duty; so the Lords mercy stayeth not in delivering us from evil, but bestoweth good things, the best things upon us, and them in abundance.

Secondly, In that those good things are exprest *by fatness*, or *by being full of fatness*,

Note;

The Lord thinks nothing too good for his good people.

When once a people, or a person are accepted of God, he spares no cost, nor thinks any thing too costly for them, the most delicious things in the world are not too good for them, (*Psalm 81. 16*) *He would have fed them also with the finest of the wheat, and with honey out of the rocks should I have satisfied thee.* I would not have fed them with wheat only, that's good, but with the finest whear, that's the best; we put in the Margin, *with the fat of wheat*; they should not have had the bran, but the flowre and the finest of the flowre! they should have had not only honey, but honey out of the Rock, which, as Naturalists observe, is the best and purest honey. Surely God cannot think any thing of this world too good for his people, who hath not thought the next world too good for them; Certainly God cannot think any of these outward enjoyments too good for his people, who hath not thought his Son too good for his people; that's the Apostles argument, (*Rom 8. 32.*) *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* even the best of outward good things, when he seeth it good for us.

In this see the difference of the spirit of the world, and of God,

to his people. The world thinks nothing bad enough for those that are the choicest servants of God, they are sorry to see that they have any thing that is good; that they have a morsel of bread, or a penny in their purses, is thought too much for them by the world: And if any trouble befall them, its good enough for them, will the World say. The World thinks any thing too good for the choicest servants of God, how much more the choicest things! But God hath other thoughts towards them, he thinks nothing too good for them, they *shall be filled with fatness.*

Thirdly, In that *Elihu* makes promise of these outward things, to the choise servants of God, whose ears are open to attend unto him;

Note;

Even outward mercies, and a full Portion of outward mercies, shall sometimes to the share of the faithful servants of God in this World.

Though such are not of this World, much less are servants to the World, yet God can make the world serve them with its best, and give them a full portion of the World, though the World be not their portion. The servants of God would not take all the World, if it were offered them, for their portion, no not a thousand Worlds, considering what a perishing thing this World is, and that at best it is but a finite thing; I say, a servant of God would not take all the World, at the hand of God, for his portion, though he is thankful for any thing, for a little of it, and unworthy of any, the least, part of it. Howbeit, many times God gives a large portion of this World to his people, and that which he sets upon their Table, that is, outward good, is *full of fatness.* Indeed some of the choise servants of God have been afraid when they have seen much of the World come in, lest God should put them off with such worldly things; when their Table hath been full of fatness and dainties, when they have had Houses and Lands, Gold and Silver plenty, they have been troubled, lest God should say to them, There is your All. It is said of *Luther*, when he had a considerable present sent him from a great Prince (the Duke of *Saxony*, as I remember) this came upon his heart, *I hope God will not put me off with these things,* with gifts from Princes; I shall be hungry as long as I live, if I have nothing to feed upon but
what

what is of the World, and poor as long as I live, if I have no other treasure, but what is earthly; & thereupon *protested he would not be satisfied with the best things of this World, though content with any thing.* Thus, I say, God deals bountifully, with a liberal hand, to some of his people especially. This was made good in the former, or Old Testament times, when the promises went more upon externals (as hath been shewed) whereas now they go more upon spiritual and heavenly things; yet there wants not examples of Gods dealing bountifully in outwards with his faithful servants under the Gospel, he hath caused that which was set upon their Table, to be full of fatness.

This is the first part of the Application, wherein *Elihu* acquaints *Job* what God would have done for him, if he had carried it humbly (as he should) under his afflicting hand, he had been out of his fetters and bonds before that time, and set in a large place, he had not fed so long upon ashes, his Table had been full of fatness.

As in this verse *Elihu* applyed the matter to *Job*, by shewing him how it should have fared with him, or how graciously and bountifully God would have dealt with him, if he had humbled himself, as he ought, and been duly affected with the afflicting hand then upon him, so in the following verse, he applyeth the Doctrine to him, by telling him, that the reason why he was at the present in such an afflicted condition, was, because he had not so humbled himself in his affliction.

Vers. 17. *But thou hast fulfilled the Judgment of the wicked, therefore Judgment and Justice take hold on thee.*

This is a home Application indeed, he speaks to his face, *Thou hast done it, thou hast fulfilled the Judgment of the wicked*; which is, as a home, so a very hard and heavy charge. Take a twofold Interpretation of it.

First, Some expound it (I think not rightly) of *Jobs* ill carriage in the time of his prosperity; as if *Elihu* had reflected upon that: *Thou hast heretofore fulfilled the Judgment of the wicked*, and that, First, by a general ill course of life. As Christ saith to the *Pharisees* (Math. 23. 32.) *Fill ye up the measure of your fathers*; some conceive *Elihu* speaking to *Job* in that sense, *Thou hast filled up the measure of the wicked*, following them in their

*Offitium impii
implevisti, q. d.
Optimi et in-
corrupti iudicis
Offitio defuisti,
impium munus et
partes obisti.*
Cajet.
*Sed receptissi-
ma vocis Ori-
ginalis senten-
tia est iudici-
um, non Offi-
cium.* Pined.

evil wayes. Secondly, That in his Magistratical capacity, or that being a Magistrate, he *had fulfilled the Judgment of the wicked*; that is, what wicked men, and their bad Causes wanted of weight and truth, of righteousness and goodness, that he filled up by favour, by accepting their persons, and giving countenance to their wickedness. Some charge him thus directly, *Thou hast done the part or Office of an unjust Judge*; when thou hadst power in thy hand, thou wast defective, short, or wanting, in discharging the Duty of an upright Judge, but didst the work of a corrupt Judge (corrupting Judgment) to the full; therefore now *Justice and Judgment take hold of thee*. But (as I said before) this is not a right Exposition of the Text; for *Elihu* never charged *Job* with a sinful course of life in former times, or before his affliction (as his friends had done) though he charged him with much sin in his carriage under his afflictions; and it may be conceived, that *Job* heard *Elihu* more patiently and equally than he heard his friends, because *Elihu* dealt more equally and candidly with him, than his Friends did; he did not lay it upon him, as if in the foregoing part of his life he had traded in wickedness; but only reproved him for his boldness, in dealing with, and appealing so often unto God, in his soars and sickness; or, because his spirit was not broken enough, notwithstanding those sore breakings and sicknesses, with which he was afflicted. So then, *Elihu* in saying this, intended not that *Job* had fulfilled the Judgment of the wicked, either by a wicked conversation, or by perverting Justice in favour of the wicked: Such a charge had been utterly inconsistent with the Testimony which God gave of him in the first Chapter of this Book.

Therefore Secondly, *Thou hast fulfilled the judgement of the wicked*, may be understood, first, that *Job* had gone near, in his behaviour under his affliction, to do even almost as *Satan* boasted, and presumed to God he would do, in the second Chapter, that if God did but lay his hand home or closer upon him, and touch his bone and his flesh, then (said *Satan*) *he will curse thee to thy face*. Now, though *Job* did never, in the height, fulfill this wicked opinion or judgement of the Devil concerning him, yet by his often complainings of, and murmurings about the severe dealings of God with him, and his not pitying him in his distress, he verged upon it, he came somewhat towards, and much too near
the

the fulfilling of that judgement of the wicked one ; and *Elihu* might ſay, *Thou haſt fulfilled the judgement of the wicked*, thou haſt done (in a degree or ſhew) as the Devil ſaid thou wouldſt, if the hand of God were heavy upon thy body.

Secondly, Theſe words, *Thou haſt fulfilled the judgement of the wicked*, may have this meaning, Thou haſt rendred thy ſelf guilty of, or obnoxious to, that judgement which God uſeth to pronounce and execute upon wicked men.

Thirdly, *Thou haſt fulfilled the judgement of the wicked* ; that is, thou under the hand of God haſt carried thy ſelf as wicked men uſually do, thou haſt imitated them in a great meaſure. What do wicked men when the hand of God is upon them ? they rage and murmur, they toyl themſelves and are full of the fury of the Lord, as a wild Bull in a net ; thou ſeemeſt to have fulfilled this judgement of the wicked, for thou haſt been ſo far from humbling thy ſelf, as thou oughteſt, that thou haſt ſtood it out and ſtouted it with God, and deſired a day of hearing ; Haſt thou not in all this fulfilled the judgement of the wicked ? In the 34th chapter of this book at the 8th verſe, *Elihu* told *Job*, that he had gone in company with the wicked, that is, that he had taken the ſame courſe with the wicked, and as they uſe to do in the day of their calamity. And that's the meaning of *Elihu's* charge here, *Thou haſt fulfilled the judgement of the wicked*, that is, thou haſt carried thy ſelf too too like wicked men in the day of thy trouble. Thus *Job* is here cenſured, not ſtrictly, as if he had done like wicked men, but becauſe he did not ſuffer ſo patiently as became a good man ; this was in him a fulfilling of the judgement of the wicked.

*More impio-
rum in
guſti impati-
ent contra de-
um murmurant
do. Sanct.*

Hence note ;

Not to ſubmit heartily, and humble our ſelves freely, when the afflicting hand of God is upon us, is to do very ſinfully, even like the wicked.

I ſhall not ſtay upon this, having ſpoken of the extream ſinfulneſs of murmuring and impatience under the hand of God heretofore.

Secondly, Note ;

If we give way to any corruption, or paſſion, it will quickly carry us a very great way in ſin, and from our duty.

P p 2

They

They that are good in their state, may sometimes in their acts, (as *Job* here) fulfil the judgment of the wicked. As hypocrites fulfil, in appearance, the judgment of the upright, that is, do like upright men; so the upright may, in appearance, do like hypocrites, and then they also fulfil the judgement of the wicked. *Job* said to his wife, in the second chapter, *Thou speakest like a foolish woman*; and now *Elihu* tells him, thou hast spoken and done as a wicked man.

Note, Thirdly;

They who do like the wicked, must not think much if they be numbred with the wicked, and involved in the same outward evils and judgments which usually fall upon wicked men.

Though we may not judge such a mans eternal estate like that of the wicked, yet as to this or that act, we may (without breach of charity) number him among the wicked, and he may quickly feel the same smart which the wicked feel. They that are godly should act like godly men, and not do any thing that represents the lusts or practises, the judgement or conversation of the ungodly; lest it be said (in one sence or other) of them, as here *Elihu* of *Job*, you also have fulfilled the judgement of the wicked.

Therefore judgment and justice take hold of thee.

As if he had said, I told thee before, if thou hadst humbled thy self, thou shouldest have had a large place, and full table, store of mercies and favours; but now judgment and justice take hold of thee. Here are two words which sometimes are used distinctly, but here they signifie the same thing, or the one is but an explanation of the other. *Justice and Judgment*; some take justice for the habit, and judgment for the act, exercise or decree; as if he had said, *Justice hath sent forth Judgment upon thee, and now both take hold of thee*; God hath noted thy sin in thy sad condition. Yet the original doth not determine it upon *Jobs* person expressly, it doth not say, *Justice and Judgment take hold of thee*, but *Justice and Judgment take hold*; we supply they take hold of thee, for that's it which *Elihu* intends; *Justice and Judgment take hold of thee, O Job*, nor will they let thee go. We find the word so used in several places, (*Prov. 3. 18.*) *Wisdom is a tree of*

of life to them that lay hold upon her. And as the believers closing with and hold-fast upon Christ is expressed by this word, so also is the hold which sin takes of an unbeliever (Prov. 5. 22.) *His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sin. Judgment and Justice take hold of thee.*

Hence Note ; First,
God will not indulge sin in any, no not in his own servants.

If a Job do like wicked men, he shall smart like the wicked. Though God will not cast any of his servants to hell for ever, yet they may be cast into a temporary hell. The Lord told David as much, in case his Children should disobey him, and break covenant with him, though he would not cast them off, yet they should pay dearly for it ; *He would visit their transgressions with a rod, and their iniquities with stripes,* (Psalm. 89. 32.) The History of Davids children makes good that Prophecie, and so hath the dealings of God with believers in all ages, who are the seed, the children of David mystical, that is, of Christ, whom and whose spiritual children the Spirit of God chiefly pointed at in that Psalm. They that do like evil men, shall suffer like evil men. Justice and Judgment properly and strictly take hold of the wicked and disobedient only, as the Apostle saith (1 Tim. 1. 9.) *The Law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, &c.* Yet when they that are righteous are found doing like the lawless and disobedient, the Law, that is Justice and Judgment will take hold of them.

Again, Some read the words intransitively, *Justice and Judgment shall hold, or hold on still*, that is, *they will hold on their course or way in punishing*, as long as thou hold'st it on thy course or way in sinning.

Hence note ;
So long as any man lives in any sinful way, he shall find Justice and Judgment taking hold of him. Justice will not leave sinners till they have left their sins.

Again, *Justice and Judgment take hold of thee*, that is, they hold thee fast.

Hence note ;
There's no getting out of the hand of divine Justice.

Men

*Figurata legis
intransitive :
Causa & ju-
dicium reti-
nebunt, i. e.
sustinebunt
vigorem suum
quandiu impi-
us fuerit.*

Men oftentimes get out of the hand of man's justice, they can break prison, they can file off their fetters and cast their cords from them; but none can break Gods prison, none can get out of the hands of divine Justice. As Justice and Judgement shall take hold of, attach and arrest sinners, so they will hold them fast, they cannot make an escape, nor can any rescue them till God signes a warrant for their release. We cannot hinder God in the exercise or execution of Justice, nor turn him aside from his purpose, either by our power or policies. God can easily hinder men of their purposes, and can undo what-ever they have done, but none can make the Justice and Judgment of God let go their hold. Therefore let us take heed, while we hold sin and iniquity, nothing can deliver us from the hand, or hold off the sin-chastning and avenging hand of God. However men fail, the Justice and Judgment of God are everlasting; they hold on their course still though men do not. Though we could pluck the Sun out of the firmament, yet not Justice out of the hand of God. We can neither put God besides his rule, nor force him from his purpose. These are the two great Prerogatives of God, he hath first a righteousness which cannot be perverted; secondly, a Justice which cannot be interrupted.

J O B, Chap. 36. Vers. 18, 19 20.

18. *Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke : then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.*

19. *Will he esteem thy riches ? no, not gold, nor all the forces of strength.*

20. *Desire not the night, when people are cut off in their place.*

IN these three verses *Elihu* presseth the Application of the former Doctrine upon *Job*, by way of admonition and counsel; forasmuch as he had done amiss before, and carried himself unduly under the hand of God, even so far as to *fulfil the counsel of the wicked*, that therefore he would now, & for the time to come, take heed, and be more wary.

And lest *Job* should slight this admonition or counsel, *Elihu* adds a powerful motive to urge that duty upon him, even the wrath of God; *Beware, Why?*

Because there is wrath;

Beware, and beware *lest* (this wrath breaking forth) *he take thee away with a stroke*. And how dreadful the wrath of God is, *Elihu* shews in these three verses by a threefold Consideration.

First, because if we fall into the Lords hand, when he is in wrath, there is no meanes under heaven that can deliver or bring us off. This he asserteth at the latter end of the 18th verse, *Then a great ransom cannot deliver thee*. It is dangerous coming under that wrath, from which a ransom, especially a great ransom, cannot deliver. What that ransom is which cannot deliver us is expressed in the 19th verse, *Will he esteem thy riches ? no, not gold.*

A Second motive to beware of this dreadful wrath is this, because if once the wrath of God be up, as there is no ransom, so no power in the creature that can deliver. That we have in the latter part of the 19th verse, *nor all the forces of strength*; though thou hast armies, millions of men in armes, yea though thou hast legions

ons of Angels in pay, yet they cannot prevail, all the forces of strength cannot deliver thee.

There is also a third consideration, to shew the unavoidableness of the wrath of God, namely, because there is no fleeing no making an escape from it. Some indeed are so angry that you cannot satisfy them with a ransom, and so powerful that no strength can deliver you from their power, yet possibly you may make an escape and hide from them, you may get out of the way and lye out of sight; but saith *Elihu*, that will not do neither in this case, (v. 20.) *desire not the night when people are cut off in their place*; the night or darkness will be no cover to thee from the wrath of an angry God. Thus you have the sum and substance of this admonition to *Job*, *Beware, because there is wrath*, and that wrath of God so terrible that nothing can deliver from it, no ransom, no power, nor can we deliver our selves by flight, or by darkness.

I shall now open the words more distinctly.

Vers. 18. *Because there is wrath, beware, &c.*

הַחֵרָה
eclor, ira, a
הַחֵרָה
caluit, incaluit,
quod iracundi
incalascunt.

The word which we translate *wrath*, comes from a root that signifies *heat*, or to be *hot*; and we know they that are angry and in wrath are very hot, their mind and spirit are enflamed, we use to say to an angry man, *why are you so hot*: the wrath of man is hot: the wrath of God, is certainly much hotter.

Because there is wrath; but where is it? I answer, First, there is wrath, in the breast or heart of God, there his anger is kindled against sinners. Secondly, There is wrath in the decree of God, against sinners (*Zeph. 2. 2.*) Thirdly, there is wrath in the threatenings of God, there it first appears and breaketh forth (*Dent. 29. 20.*) So the Apostle (*Rom. 1. 18.*) *The wrath of God is revealed from heaven.* How is it revealed? As his love is revealed in promises, so his wrath in threatenings. Fourthly, there is wrath in the works of God, in his judgments acted upon the children of men. As there is wrath hidden in his breast and decreed, so wrath is heard from his mouth in terrible threatenings, and seen in his hand by terrible judgments executed upon his enemies. We may see wrath in the dealings of God; his works tell us he is angry. Therefore fear to persist, lest in his anger he take thee quite away. We should beware of sinful works, lest we provoke and stir up the Lords anger to make bloody work. *There is wrath*, (particularly

Early as to the dealings of God with thee, *O Job*, saith *Elihu*) therefore,

Beware.

The word *beware*, is not expressly in the Hebrew text, but it is plainly intended, and supplied by Interpreters, in general, to make up and clear the sense of this verse. We have a like reading in the 36th of *Isaiah*, v. 18. *Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, &c.* The word *beware*, is a supplement added there in a different character, to shew that it is not expressed in the Hebrew. As if *Rabshakeh* had said, If *Hezekiah* persuade you to stand out against my Master *Sennacherib*, you will provoke his wrath to your utter ruine and destruction, therefore *beware*. There, as here, *beware*, bespeakes our caution; because there is wrath, take heed what you do or say.

Hence note, First;

There is a wrath of God against sin, or, God will appear in wrath against sinners.

The Apostle *John* in his first Epistle (*Chap. 4. 8.*) tells us in a direct predication, *God is love*; and 'tis as true, *God is wrath*. The wrath of God is a divine perfection, it is the perfection of God, as his love is. God is one and the same, he is not divided into several passions, perturbations or affections; but thus the Scripture speaks of him, to denote what we may expect from him, and what he is and will be in his actions towards them who obey him not.

Secondly note;

The wrath of God appears and is put forth in his works of judgment.

As the goodness of God is his love acted, or as the good things which God doth for us are love-actions, so the evils that are upon us are wrath-actions. I do not say that every evil which we endure in this world is the acting of wrath upon us, but I say, there is wrath in the actions of evil upon us. *Moses* said to *Aaron*, (*Numb 16. 46.*) *Go quickly, take a Censer. (hast, hast) and make an atonement, there is wrath gone out.* How did he know wrath was gone out? He tells us in the next words, *the plague is*

Q q

begun:

begun : He saw wrath in that dispensation of God; the plague begun argued that God was angry. *Because there is wrath, beware.*

Hence note, Thirdly ;

We should by all means take heed and beware of the wrath of God.

The wrath of man is a small matter to the wrath of God, yet we are very careful to beware of the wrath of man, especially of great men. The wrath of the Kings and Princes of the world, is like the roaring of the Lion, saith *Solomon*, and we are ready to tremble at that; but O how should we tremble at, and beware of the wrath of God ! *Who knoweth the power of thine anger ?* (*Psal. 90. 11.*) We may take some scantling, some measure of the wrath of man, and know how far it can go, and what it can do; but we can take no measure of the wrath of God, for it is immeasurable, and therefore we should avoid every thing that procures his wrath. That's the meaning of this caveat ; do nothing that blowes up or incities the wrath of God. But what is it that blowes up wrath ? It is sin, every sin hath that in it which may blow up wrath. The Apostle saith, *The wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*, not only against this or that ungodliness, nor only against this or that degree of ungodliness, ('tis neither against ungodliness of some special kind, nor of some special degree) but against all ungodliness, therefore all ungodliness and all unrighteousness is to be avoided.

And as we should do nothing to provoke wrath, so we should do every thing which may prevent wrath (*Psal. 2. 12.*) *Kiss the Son, why ? lest he be angry, and his wrath kindle.* Who is the Son, and what's this kissing of the Son which prevents wrath ? The Son is Christ, he is the Son of God ; this kissing is a kiss of homage, an humble submission to Jesus Christ by faith and obedience ; it is a Gospel receiving of Christ : to kiss the Son is to receive Christ as our King, as our Priest, as our Prophet, to receive Christ in the whole manifestation of his Mediatorship. Do this to prevent wrath, kiss the Son. And consider how terrible he reports that wrath to be : *If his wrath be kindled but a little, blessed are they that put their trust in him.* Oh then take heed that you do not provoke the wrath of God, and do your utmost to prevent it ;
which

which nothing can do but kissing the Son, that will and that only can do it; submit to Jesus Christ, receive Jesus Christ, without him it is impossible to prevent wrath. He that believes not, *the wrath of God abideth on him*, (John 3. 36.) Jesus Christ alone is he which delivereth us from the wrath to come, (1 Thes. 1. 10.) And if we further consider this wrath from the expression, both of the Psalm and of the Text, it should make us (who are so fearful of, and who so shift from the wrath of men) exceedingly afraid of the wrath of God. The word, as was shewed before, comes from a root which signifieth the heat of fire; implying that the wrath of God is fire; and (Heb. 10. 27.) it is called *fiery indignation*; yea, God himself (Heb. 12. 29.) is called *a consuming fire*. Why doth the Scripture express him and his wrath, by fire? Surely because fire is well known to us, and we are well able to conceive how dreadful a thing fire is, when it is in its rage and fury, when it hath got the mastery; *Fire is a comfortable servant, but a dreadful master. Now as fire is the most dreadful element, so wrath is the most dreadful attribute of God*; yet I may say, that elementary fire which (as to our sense) is so dreadful, is but a sun-shine compared to the wrath of God; as will appear if we consider it in two things.

First, it burns internally. The visible fire burns but visible things; outward things, but this fire burns within, scorches the conscience, burns the soul, burns that which all the fires in the world cannot reach, cannot touch. God is a Spirit, and the wrath of God is a fire that burnes the spirits, and will for ever afflict and torment the consciences of wicked men. The hottest fires which the most enraged malicious Persecutors kindle, cannot touch the spirit; the conscience is quiet, the soul triumphs while the flesh fries in the fire. 'Tis the fire of divine wrath alone which hath power upon the soul; and a burning there is ten thousand times more painful than the burning of our flesh.

Secondly, *the wrath of God burns eternally*. Your fires here though they are dreadful, yet they go out, they consume themselves by consuming the matter or fuel cast into them; they cannot continue alwayes, because they eat up and devour that which maintaines them: But the wrath of God burns continually. *God is called a consuming fire, not because the fire of his wrath consumes, but because he consumeth sinners in the fire of wrath*;

Q q 2 and

and when we say, he consumeth sinners in his wrath, or his wrath consumeth sinners, we are not to understand it of a consumption as to *being*, but only as to a *well or comfortable being*; for not only the souls, but the very bodies of sinners shall remain in this fire of the wrath of God for ever unconsumed. The bodies of the damned shall be raised again at the great day, and being re-united to their souls, both shall abide unconsumed in the fire of this consuming wrath eternally. The great dread of ordinary fire is, that it consumes what it burns, but the greatest dread of this fire is, that it consumes not that which it burns. O therefore take heed of the wrath of God, the wrath of God is terrible as to corporal and temporal judgements, much more as to spirituall and eternal judgements; that is, as the fire of his wrath burns both internally and eternally. *Because there is wrath, beware,*

Left he take thee away with his stroke.

פשוט
Cum com-
sione.

Here the danger is exprest. If the Lord be angry, he can soon take thee away with a stroke; he can remove, yea hurry thee away out of all thy present joys and enjoyments, to everlasting sorrows. The word imports a violent remove. The stroke here spoken of is like that (*Chap. 24. 26.*) *He striketh them as wicked men, in the open sight of others*; that is, he shames them as well as punisheth them; as he strikes them with his hand to their confusion, so he strikes or claps his own hands together in derision, as 'tis said (*Chap. 27. 23.*) *Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place*; we may take it in both these significations; *Left he take thee away with a stroke*; that is, left he strike thee so as to make an utter end of thee, or left he take thee away with derision, clapping his hands at thee, and pouring contempt upon thee. Have we not reason to beware of that wrath, which in either sense can take us away with his stroke? Yet I conceive a third sense may be given of these words, *Left he take thee away with his stroke*, that is, left he take thee away suddenly, even as suddenly as a stroke can be given.

Hence Note;

First, *God can presently strike to destruction,*

He can take the strongest away with a stroke, he can do it with one stroke. The Lord needs not stand cutting and flailing, hacking

ing and hewing (as we say) all day long; one stroke of his will do it. He took away *Herod* at one stroke (*Acts* 12. 23.) He took away *Ananias* and *Saphira* at one stroke (*Acts* 5. 5.) *Nadab* and *Abihu* were taken away with one stroke (*Lev.* 10. 1.) All these perished, and so have thousands more, as with a stroke, so suddenly, at one stroke. The Lord can strike home; as *Abimelech* said to *David* in the case of *Saul*, when he found him in the Trench, *Let me strike him at once, and I will not strike him a second time.* The Lord threatened (*Nah.* 1. 9.) to bring destruction upon those at once, when he told them *Affliction should not rise a second time*; as if he had said, I will not strike another blow at them, I'll hit them home, and do my work with one blow. We need not fear how many, or how mighty his enemies are, he can rid himself of them with one stroke. The Lord strikes some to take away their sin; thus he strikes his own people: others he strikes to take away their persons; thus he strikes the wicked, especially those who enemy-like, designedly strike at Him, his Name, his Truth, his Glory. *Elihu* doth not say, *Beware lest he strike thee*, but *lest he take thee away with a stroke.* The Lord often strikes his own faithful servants, they receive many a stroke, many a lash, many a blow, many a chastisement at his hands, but he doth not take them away with a stroke, as he doth the wicked. The Lord strikes his servants to take away their sins, and he strikes wicked men to take away their lives, to destroy them utterly.

Secondly, As the word signifieth taking away with clapping of the hands or with derision,

Note;

God will even laugh at the ruine of wicked men,

He will clap his hands at their fall. We read (*Prov.* 1. 26, 27.) how *Wisdom* called and cried, and none would answer, all set her calls and counsels at naught; what followed? *I (said Wisdom, that is, Christ) will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh*; as much as is said in the Text, I will take them away with a stroke, or with clapping my hands, with a kind of deriding *plaudite* at their going off, or rather at their being thrust off the Stage of this world. They are in the most sad condition, whom God not only destroys, but derides; they have most cause to mourn in their affliction, at whose affliction God laughs.

laughs. It is said (*Job 9. 23.*) *God will laugh at the tryal* of the innocent, and why, was shewed in opening that place; I only touch it now upon this occasion: The Lord knows the innocent will come off with honour, will stand it out in their tryal bravely, he sees what Courage & Faith & Patience they will manifest in and under their sufferings. Now as the Lord even claps his hands, and laughs, when his chosen noble ones go forth to the tryal, knowing they will honour him in their tryal; so the Lord laughs at the destruction of the wicked, knowing that his Justice and Righteousness shall have a full stroke at them, and lay both their shame and sin open to all the world.

That the Lord in his wrath takes away with a stroke, should make us all *beware*, fear and tremble; but that which followeth, may make us wary, fear and tremble much more; for, saith *Elihu* in the close of the verse,

Then a great Ransome cannot deliver thee.

כפר כפר
Redemptionis
Pretium, quod
ἀντὶ τοῦ ἁμαρτίας
appellatur.

The word rendred a *Ransome* signifies that which is paid as a price for the deliverance of a Captive out of bondage: Thus Christ gave himself a Ransome for sinners. But here is a Case wherein no Ransome will be taken, no, though it be, not a small, petty Ransome, but a *great Ransome*, of that (saith *Elihu*) *it cannot deliver thee*. As if he had said, When once God is so far provoked, that the Decree is gone forth to destroy thee, then it will be in vain to think of getting off by Ransome.

Here it may be queried, What is this great Ransom that will not deliver? There is a twofold Ransome, by one of which the people of God are sometimes delivered, and alwayes by the other.

First, The people of God are sometimes ransomed or delivered by the destruction and ruine of the wicked; that's their Ransom, and that, not seldom, proves a great Ransome. It is said expressly (*Prov. 21. 18.*) *The wicked shall be a Ransome for the righteous*; how, a Ransome for the righteous! will a wicked man pay a Ransome for the righteous? or will the wicked man offer himself a Ransome for him, and say, I'll dye instead of the righteous man? surely there's no such thing to be expected from him. *Peradventure for a good man* (saith the Apostle, *Rom. 5. 7, 8.*) *one would even dare to dye*; that is, one good man may possibly be willing to lay down his life for another good man. *Scarcely for*

a righteous man would *one dye*; that is, for a man, who only gives every man his due, or doth every man right: but for a good man, that is, for a man that hath been very kind and bountiful to others, some *would even dare to dye*; yet he that doth so, must be supposed to be a righteous and a good man himself. For it cannot be thought that a wicked man would give himself a Ransome for the righteous, that he would dye for him whom he doth not love, yea, whom he usually hates to the death. How then is it affirmed by *Solomon*, that the wicked shall be a Ransome for the righteous? The meaning is, God will destroy the wicked, to save the righteous, or he will save the righteous, even through the blood and destruction of the wicked: In that sence the wicked are many times a Ransome for the righteous, rather than the righteous shall perish, the Lord will destroy the wicked. Thus the Lord spake by his Prophet of old (*Isa. 43. 3.*) *I gave Egypt for thy Ransome, Ethiopia and Sheba for thee.* How was Egypt a Ransome for *Israel*? had they any mind to deliver the people of God? no; but rather than God would not have *Israel* saved, he destroyed *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians* in the Red Sea. Thus the Lord makes the wicked a Ransome for the righteous. Though *Egypt* were a very goodly Country, yet God destroyed it by ten Plagues, that he might deliver *Israel*. Though *Pharaoh* was a great Prince, he drowned him in the Sea, rather than his people should go back into Captivity. *Solomon* gives us this sence of the Prophets words fully in his own (*Prov. 11. 8.*) *The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead.*

Secondly, There is another, a more excellent Ransome for the people of God, and that is *the Blood of Jesus Christ*: *We are bought with a price*, dearly bought, and that's the Price with which we are bought (*1 Cor. 6. 20.*) that's a Ransome which sets sinners free, and makes them free indeed (*Joh. 8. 36.*) free from sin, and free unto righteousness (*Math. 20. 28.*) *He gave himself a Ransome for many*; for a great many, for all who believe and take hold of his Name. When *Elisha* saith, *A great Ransome cannot deliver*, 'tis not to be understood of the Ransome which Christ hath paid; that's a Ransome so great, so precious, that it hath, and doth, and will for ever deliver the greatest, the worst of sinners, who run so far from the wrath of God.

What then is the Ransome that is invalid and useles, which will not be accepted, which cannot deliver? 1

I answer, First, in general ; it is any thing on this side Christ, be it what it will. The greatest Ransome that men can devise or heap up together, or that men can make, whatsoever it is, besides the Ransome of Gods own appointment, will not deliver a sinner when once wrath hath siezed upon him.

I answer, Secondly, as to particulars : It is not, First, Riches; no not Gold. Secondly, It is not our own prayers, no not tears. Thirdly, It is not our own good works, no not our own righteousness. Fourthly, It is not any of the good works or righteousness of any other, the holiest men on earth, no not the righteousness of the Saints and holy Angels in Heaven, that can deliver us from the wrath of God. The first of these particulars *Elihu* gives for instance in the 19th verse (of which I shall there speak further) and we may understand this verse of all the rest. *Then a great Ransome cannot deliver thee.*

Hence note ;

There is nothing but the Blood of Christ can ransom sinners from the wrath of God, nor will that deliver some sinners.

(I suppose *Elihu* might have respect to that, in urging *Job* to humble himself and repent) There are Cases, wherein even the Blood of Christ will not deliver ; though that hath an intrinsecal vertue, power, and value, to deliver any sinner, yet, I say, there are Cases, wherein even that great Ransome, the Blood of Christ, will not deliver sinners ; or thus, there are many sinners in such a Case, that Christ will not ransom them by his Blood. But who are they ?

First, All that are impenitent, and persist obstinately in their sins. If any man resolve to go on in sin, the Blood of Christ is no Ransome for him. Jesus Christ came to save us from our sins, not to save us in our sins.

Secondly, All that are unbelievers ; though they have a great measure of sorrow (such as it is) for sin, yea, suppose they have left off the outward practise of those sins, for which they have sorrowed, yet if they do not lay hold on Christ by faith, his Blood is no Ransome for them. As Christ will not save presumptuous sinners, who believe without repenting, so neither will he save incredulous sinners, who repent without believing. Thirdly, That great price of the Blood of Christ is not a Ransome for apostatizing

ing sinners, who having pretended to Repentance, and made profession of faith, yet go back from Christ and his wayes, at once building what they seemed to have destroyed by repentance, and destroying what they seem'd to be built up in by faith. The Apostle declares the doom of all such (*Heb. 10. 26.*) *For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more Sacrifice for sin.* Wilful sinners against received Light cast off the Sacrifice of Christ (which is our Ransome, and) with which they seemed to close; and having cast that off, God will never be at the cost to provide them another Sacrifice: *There remains* (saith the Text) *no more Sacrifice for sin.* They would have no more to do with that Sacrifice for sin (that's the case of those who sin against the Holy Ghost) and there is no other Sacrifice for them. Such Apostates *crucifie to themselves the Son of God afresh, and* (by their being ashamed of him, and turning from him, as much as in them lyes) *put him to open shame,* as the Apostle speaks (*Heb. 6. 6.*) but God will never crucifie his Son afresh, nor put him again to open shame, for the ransoming of wilful Apostates. It is the ground of our hope, that God once gave up his Son to be crucified for us, but they are of all men most hopeles, who crucifie to themselves the Son of God afresh. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, will not save *those that tread him under foot,* nor shall *the Blood of the Covenant* be a Ransom for *those who count it an unholy thing;* as 'tis said at the 29th verse. They who refuse the Gospel, that is, Gospel-Grace, shall never have any benefit by the Gospel; these Apostates do not only refuse to chuse the Grace of the Gospel, but refuse it after a seeming choyce of it, and are therefore said in the close of that verse, *to have done despite to the Spirit of Grace;* and shall they who despise, and, which is more, do despite to the Spirit of Grace, be ransom'd through Grace? Thus we see, that as nothing but the Blood of Christ can be a Ransome, so some shall have no share in, nor benefit by that great Ransome. They who repent not, they who believe not, they who sin wilfully after a profession made, both of Faith and Repentance, can have no deliverance by that great Ransome, the Blood of Jesus Christ.

Elihu having told Job in General, that if he provoked God to wrath, then a great ransome could not deliver him, proceeds to give him one particular instance of what cannot; and he gives it

R r in

in that which is the most usual ranfome, and which hath ranfomed thousands from the wrath of man, that is, *riches, gold.*

Vers. 19. *Will he esteem thy riches? no, not gold, nor all the forces of strength.*

As if he had said, Possibly, O *Job*, thou having been a great man, a rich man, the richest the greatest man in all the East, mayst think thou couldst buy off thy offence with gold, and get out from under his wrath by thy wealth and riches; but suppose thou wert as great and rich as ever, or greater and richer than any are, or ever were,

Will he esteem thy riches?

TV ordin-
is: & quia res
estimanda or-
dinatur alie
juxta alias, ideo
pro estimare
sumitur. Merc:

The word rendred *esteem*, signifies to put in order, because things which are of esteem and value, are laid up handsomely and orderly. As no man esteems trash, so he will not lay it up among his treasures. *Will he esteem, or lay up thy riches*, as some precious thing, as his treasure; surely no. The question (as frequently in Scripture) is a strong denial; will he? he will not value thy riches, no more than a rush; what dost tell him of thy riches, he makes no account of all that thou hast to give, yea, though thou hadst all the world to give: Men will esteem thy riches, money answers all things among men, but alas, it will answer nothing with God, *will he esteems*

Thy riches?

Some translate the word which we render *riches*, by *nobleness* or *greatness*; so Mr Broughton, *Will he esteem thy nobleness?* The word signifies both, and *Job* was both, he was a great man, and a Nobleman, the chief Magistrate, a Prince among the people where he dwelt, as appears fully in the 29th Chapter. *Will he esteem either thy riches, or thy nobleness?* shalt thou be accepted because thou art a great Lord; a mighty man, dost thou think the Lord will esteem thee for this? Certainly no. We may take in both senses of the word, *Will he esteem thy riches, or Nobleness?*

Hence note, First;

Greatness without godness, is of little or no esteem with God.

Note,

Note, Secondly;

God will not be taken off by any outward respect whatsoever, from bringing vengeance upon evil men.

God will not be steep in his course of Justice, with riches or great titles, with honour, or nobleness: The riches of one man cannot ransom another, (Psal. 49. 7, 8, 9.) They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him. Nor can any mans riches ransom himself. (Pro. 10. 2.) Treasures of wickedness: (that is, treasures gotten wickedly) profit nothing. Nor will the treasures of the wicked (though well gotten) profit them, (Pro. 11. 4.) Riches availe not in the day of wrath, (Zeph. 1. 7.) Their gold and silver shall not profit them in the day of my wrath. If you present your selves before God with titles of honour, and bags of gold, neither the one nor the other will do it, he will not regard thy riches, nor nobleness. When Ishmael came treacherously upon those Jewes, ten of them said, Slay us not, (Jer. 4. 8.) for we have great treasures in the field, of wheat, and of Barly, and Oile, and of Wine; so he forbore, and slew them not among their brethren. But this will not do in the day of the Lords anger.

Will he esteeme thy riches?

Some translate thus, Will he regard thy crying or clamor? As if Elihu had said, Cry as much as thou wilt; the Lord will not regard it. This goes higher. Many possibly will not be taken off from the process of Justice, by greatness or riches, who yet by our humble supplication and cry may be taken off; But will the Lord regard thy cry? or as the Septuagint read it, Will he have regard to thy prayer? Wicked men that have rejected the Lords command, will yet hope, or rather presume, the Lord will hear their cry, and therefore they will be at their prayers in times of trouble, when the wrath of God breaks out; this is their last resort and refuge. They who never made the Lord their choyce in good times, will yet make him their refuge in evil times, or in dayes of trouble; they think surely to be sheltered, and saved, and spared, when they pray: but this will not do neither; Will he esteeme thy prayers? The Hebrew Text, at least, allows, if not clearly holds

R 12

UW clama-
vit. Septua-
ginta id in
mente habuisse
videntur, nam
verum desin-
ent UW o-
pulentis dives
(Isa: 32. 5.)
UW pau scu-
rec significat
opes, cap. 30.
24. cap. 34.
20.
Non estimabit
clamorem tu-
um, nihil ducit
quantum vis
clames; non eo
movebitur, sed
pro diuina
out malo. Merce-

out this reading, and it can be no hurt to take in as much profitable sense, as the words, without undue straining, may hold out to us. So then, when the Lords wrath appears, neither riches, nor honour, nor prayers, nor teares can give sinners any relief. The cries and prayers of the wicked are no more regarded by God, than their riches or greatness. *Then they shall call upon me,* (saith Wisdom, Pro. 1. 28.) that is, *When their feare cometh as desolation, and their destruction cometh as a Whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon them,* (v. 27.) when 'tis thus with them, *then they shall call upon me, but I will not answer;* that is, I will not esteem their cry. That's a very remarkable Scripture, (Psal. 18. 41.) where David speaking of his enemies, how the Lord had given him their necks, and a power to destroy them that hated him, presently adds, *They cryed, but there was none to save them,* (but it may be they cryed where they should not for help; no, saith the Text, *they cryed*) *even to the Lord, but he answered them not: then did I beat them as small as the dust before the wind,* &c. The Lord having declared how resolv'd he was to proceed in a way of wrath against the Jewish Nation, adds (Jer. 14. 12.) *When they fast I will not hear their cry.* That people had been very obstinate and rebellious, they had withstood the call of God by the Prophet; yet when they saw wrath appearing and approaching, then they betook themselves to fasting and prayer; but saith the Lord, it shall not advantage them, though they fast and in their fasting cry, yet I will not regard them, nor be entreated: I know they will be praying to me, but I will take no notice of them. See how dreadfull a thing it is to refuse the offers and tenders of grace, to go on in a way of sin; for then, no ransom will do it, riches and honours, yea prayers and cries and teares, shall not be regarded. *Will he esteem thy riches?*

No not gold.

This is to be joyned (according to our translation) with the former words, and it suits fully with our translation of these words; Gold being the best of worldly riches, and having the greatest power with and command over men; yet saith *Elihu*, *Will he esteem thy riches, no not Gold.* He mentions that, because (I say) it is the choicest part of riches, the worst sort of gold is of higher esteem and worth, than any other metal; Gold beares the greatest

test price among metals, and hath the greatest prevalency among men, but none with God. The word rendred Gold, signifies defending, but gold is no defence against God. *Will he esteem thy riches? no not Gold.* The note is the same in substance with the former.

The Lord regards not men for their riches, no not for the best of riches.

Not only will he not esteem your Copper, and Brasse, and Iron and Tynn, but not your Gold, (1 Pet. 1. 18.) Gold doth much with men, but nothing with God. I shall not stay upon this clause, it being only an hightning of the same thing before asserted. But

There are two other readings of the latter part of this verse, upon which I shall stay a little: First, thus;

Will he esteem thy riches? no not in affliction.

The word which we render as one, signifying the best gold, refined gold, other interpreters render as two words, which signifie to be perplexed or in streights; *Will he esteem thy riches? no though thou art in the greatest streights, and knowest not what to do.*

Hence Note;

The Lord will not regard rich wicked men, when they are in streights.

The Lord who esteems not the wicked rich at any time, will lest esteem them in an evil time. The Lord who hath an esteem of, and a regard to the godly at all times, hath it especially in a time of streights and trouble. But as the Lord never regards wicked men, so then lest when they have most need of it. *Will he esteem them? no not in affliction.*

There is a third reading of these words: *Will he esteem thy riches? no not any defence.* As our translation, *no not gold,* falls in plainly with the first words of the Text; so this with the latter. *Will he esteem thy riches, no not gold,* say we, answering the word riches in the first part of the verse. *Will he esteem thy riches? no not defence,* say others, which answers those words, *nor all the forces of strength,* in the latter part of the verse. So then, as our reading complies with the former part of the verse, so this hath as faire a

com-

Ne quidem in angustia בלצו ego nomen בלצו venio in angustia; alii reddunt in significatione auri, in qua reperitur, cap. 22. 24. sed ibi scribitur. בלצו in accentu distinguente pro בלצו Pisc:

בלצו in piol. contra rapinas munivit, hinc בלצו aurum lectissimum, quasi ab igno munivit aurum quod sit horum munimentum,

compliance with the latter; *No not any defence.* The word signifies to fortify, to fence, to make strong, and hence, *gold*, because gold is mans strength and defence. Riches are a great strength; to be rich in gold is a mans strong tower. *Will he esteeme thy riches? no, not gold, or defence,*

Nor all the forces of strength.

These words, in the close of the verse, being the same with the middle part, as last rendred, may very well be drawn up into one, and conceived of, as if *Elihu* had said, *Suppose thou art a mighty man and hast strong forces, he will not esteeme thee for all that; The very weaknes of God is stronger than man (1 Cor. 1. 25.)* that is, than the strongest man, or than any strength which man can procure, either to oppose God, or to protect himself against him. The Prophet to shew the great power of the *Chaldeans*, saith (*Hab. 1. 10.*) *They shall scoff at kings, and deride every strong hold.* Surely the Lord is so far from esteeming the defences and forces of strength, which men make to, and for themselves, that he scoffs at and derides them. The Lord will deride all the strong holds of man, even the forces of strength. Some get internal carnal strong holds, to fortifie themselves in, of which the Apostle speaks (*2 Cor. 10. 4.*) *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the casting down of strong holds.* Most sinners are men of wit, they provide themselves strong holds to save their sins in, they have their excuses and reasonings to defend their sins or themselves in their sins by. Others are men of might, they get external strong holds, they have Armies and Cities of defence, to secure themselves by; but *will the Lord regard either?* Not the strong holds, set up and maintained by force of wit, *no, nor all the forces of strength.* Though thou hast Army upon Army, and City upon City, though thou dost add Castle to Castle, and Fort to Fort, they are no more than paper walls before the Lord. As neither riches nor nobleness, so no power of man can secure man from the hand of God. Mr. *Broughton* varieth a little from our reading, yet concurs fully in sense; *No gold, nor any other thing should be able to give sound strength;* which himself expounds by this short gloss. *If now thou despisest repentance, thou shalt be utterly cast off.* As if he had said to *Job*, it is not thy, or any mans standing out against God, that

that will help you, your only help is in repentance and self-humbling before God. *Will he esteem thy riches? no, not gold, nor all the forces of strength.*

Hence note ;

There is no strength against the Lord.

As there is no counsel, so no force of strength against the Lord. Hannah sang this truth (1 Sam. 2. 9.) *By strength shall no man prevail*, that is, against man, if God be with him ; much more is it true that by strength shall no man prevail against God (Isa. 1. 31.) *The strong shall be tow, and the maker thereof as a spark*; that is, as some expound, their Idols, whom they made their strength, shall be as tow, that is, as the most combustible matter, easily consumed, and the maker of it, that is, the Idol-maker, shall be as a spark. Do but blow a spark among tow, and what will become of it? Such are the strongest Idols, in which men trust, and such are the mightiest and strongest men before the Lord, who trust in them. Tow or flax or hemp (after the dressing) is as tinder, that the least spark will give fire to. The strong (Idol) shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark ; or, which is in effect the same, *The strong (man) shall be tow, and that which he hath made, or (as we put in the Margin) his work*, that is, his Idol, shall be as a spark, and they shall both burn, or perish together. This is the sentence of the Lord against the strong, a spark shall set them on fire and burn them ; how then shall the strong be able to stand before the Lord who is not a spark, but a fire, and that a consuming fire ! and therefore, I may urge *Elihu's* counsel to *Job*, upon all sorts of men, upon those especially who persist in any sin, take heed, *because there is wrath, beware, &c.* or I may urge them with the Prophets dehortation (Jer. 9. 23.) *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the mighty man in his strength, nor the rich man in his riches*, for, none of these can help or deliver from wrath, only Jesus Christ can, and it hath been shewed who they are to whom he will not be a delivering ransom. It may be very useful to consider what negatives *Elihu* puts upon sinners as to deliverance from kindled wrath; not riches, not honour, not crying, not praying, not strength, not defence can deliver without turning from sin to God, and all in Christ.

Elihu

Elihu having urged two arguments to make *Job* beware of wrath, first, because nothing could ransom him, God regards not riches, no not gold; secondly, because nothing could rescue him, all the *forces of strength* could not defend him against, nor fetch him out from under the hand of God; *Elihu* (I say) having dispatched these two arguments, he in the 20th *verse* gives a further, and that a third argument to move *Job* to take heed of wrath, because, as he could neither be ransomed nor rescued, so neither could he be hid or sheltered from the wrath of God. That is the general sense of the next *verse*.

Vers. 20. *Desire not the night, when people are cut off in their place.*

ENW
significat re-
spirare, anho-
lare, ad aliquid
vel rei alieni
in summo de-
siderio teneri.
Merc.

The root of that word which we render *desire*, signifies a very earnest breathing and longing after a thing, as conceiving and believing the enjoyment thereof would be an exceeding comfort and refreshment to us. So 'tis used in the seventh Chapter of this book at the second *verse*; as the *servant earnestly desireth the shadow*, &c. When a labourer is hot and sweltered almost (as we say) at his work in the Sun, how earnestly doth he desire the shadow! We say (in the Margine of that place) *he gapeth after the shadow*. A man, when he is hot, gapes to suck in fresh air. Such an intendment and force there is in this word, *desire not*, long not for, gape not after

the night,

The night seems not to be a thing, or a season so desirable, that we should gape for it or long after it. *Solomon* saith (*Ecc. 11. 7.*) *Surely light is pleasant, and it is a comfortable thing for the eyes to behold the Sun*; but who hath a desire after the night? what is the beauty or comeliness of the night that any should so much desire it? why then doth *Elihu* here forbid *Job* (as supposing he did) to desire it? *desire not the night.*

I answer, the night may be taken two wayes, or under a two-fold notion. First properly, as that which casteth a vail or mantle of darkness over both persons and things, and covers them from our sight; in allusion to which, the sense is this; Do not hope to hide or conceal thy self from the eye or knowledge of God. As thou canst not be ransomed, as thou canst not be rescued from
his

his power (which was shewed before) so desire not the night, for thou canst not be obscured from his knowledge under the covert of it, there is no hiding from God. Though I judge that interpretation too gross, which supposeth *Elihu* counselling *Job* not to desire the night, as robbers and adulterers, to cover him while doing wickedly, yet possibly he might think *Job* was not so free to confess the evils which he had done, and therefore rather desired the concealment of them.

Secondly, the night in Scripture, as also in humane Authors, is put improperly for death. All the dead are wrapt up in a night of darkness. Hence that counsel (*John 9.4.*) *Work while you have the day, the night cometh when no man can work.* We may work, yea, much work is done in the natural night. It is said of the vertuous woman (*Prov. 31. 18.*) *Her candle goes not out by night;* she and her maids are at work in the night; therefore it cannot be strictly meant, that no man can work in the night. The night there is the night of death, or of an extream troublous life; in these nights, especially in the former, no man can work, for there is no wisdom, nor device, nor labour in the grave whether we are going, (*Ecc. 9. 10.*) According to this Scripture interpretation, desire not the night, is desire not death. *Job* had put forth such desires more than once (*Chap. 7. 15.*) *My soul chooseth strangling and death rather than life.* Mr. Broughton translates, *Breath not unto that night: for peoples passage to their place:* That is, (saith he) desire not death, the common passage of all men, as thou hast done. Therefore *Elihu* seems here to call *Job* off from those desires; do not thou peevishly or impatiently (because of the trouble of thy life) call for death, lest it come too soon, and it do by thee as it hath done by many others, whom it hath cut off in judgment. So it followes here, *Desire not the night,*

when people are cut off in their place.

Death is a cutting off. As many die in the night, so when-ever any die they are cut off from this world, and all the employments of it. they are cut off from their dearest friends and relations. Death cuts off the thread of life, and us from the comforts of this life.

The H brew is, *when people ascend.* The Original Scripture expresseth dying by ascending, though the death of the wicked is rather

*Ne aspires ad
illam noctem
(sc. mortis)
qua abeunt po-
puli ad locum
suum. Jun.
Qua e medio
tollimur popu-
li in loco ipso-
rum. Pisc.*

Verbum **thy**
ascendere pro
exiit & tolli
junior.

Translatio a
candelis, qua-
rum lumen af-
cendit, atque ita
paulatim confur-
untur ipsa.

Sub, subter se-
pe significat, in
loco.

ther a descending: It is said by a late Writer concerning the hea- then profane and wicked Emperors of Rome, *Such a one descended* (that is, died) *in such a year of his abomination.* Now though the wicked descend when they die, yet there is a sence also wherein all men may be said to ascend when they die; and there is no doubt but the godly, as to their more noble part, ascend to God when they die. Thus the word is used in the fifth Chapter of this Book, at the 16th verse, where *Eliphaz* speaking of the death of a godly man, saith to *Job*, *Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh (or ascendeth) in his season.* *David* deprecated an immature death under this Metaphor (*Psal.* 102. 14.) *Take me not away in the midst of mine age.* The word is, *let me not ascend in the midst of mine age*, that is, before I have measured the usual course of life. Thus to ascend, is the same with to be cut off; death cuts off the best from this world, and then they ascend to a better. This sence of the words suits well with the latter exposition of the *night*, as taken for the night of death. The word ascend, is conceived to have in it a double allusion; first, to corn which is taken up by the hand of the reaper, and then laid down on the stubble. Secondly, unto the light of a candle, which as the candle spends, or as that which is the food of the fire is spending, ascends, and at last goes out and vanisheth.

There is yet a further sence of the whole verse thus; *Desire not the night, &c.* That is, do not curiously enquire the cause of that divine judgement by which God sometimes sweeps away whole nations, good and bad together, in the night, or suddenly. Or thus, disquiet not thy mind in the night, but rather rest in the will of God, when thou seest or hearest of those great destructions which come upon persons or nations. *Desire not the night, when people are cut off in their place*, that is, when they die in, or are removed from the place where they formerly lived and had their abode; in which sence it is said of the dead, *their place shall know them no more* (*Psal.* 103. 16.) How well soever any are settled, death cuts them off in their place.

First, Forasmuch as *Elihu* speaking to *Job* in this distressed estate, wishes him *not to desire the night*,

Observe;

Observe ;

In times of distress and trouble we are apt to make many strange wishes, or to express uncouth requests and desires.

The Prophet *Jeremiah* quits himself from this in one point (*chap. 17. 16.*) *I have not desired the woful day (Lord) thou knowest.* He was so far from desiring it, that he prayed for the peace and prosperity of that people ; but though *Jeremy* did not desire the evil day to come on others, yet when the evil day was come upon himself we find him venting strange and strong desires of that kind (*Chap. 9. 2.*) *O that my head were a fountain, and mine eyes rivers of tears, that I might weep night and day for the slain of the daughter of my People.* He had visions of slaughter, and he did even beg a head melted into water for abundant mourning over that day. But what were his other, what were his further wishes, with respect to himself at that time ? we have them in the next verse. *O that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of a wayfaring man, that I might leave my people, and go from them, for they be all adulterers, a company of treacherous men.* What uncomfortable desires had *Jeremiah* as to that day of distress ! O how did he covet to have a retiring place, any hole in the wilderness, like a wayfaring man, that he might leave his people and see them no more, because they were so wicked, and their wickedness he foresaw would bring down such dreadful evils upon them. And as he wished this sad retirement upon the foresight of evils to come, so we find him in another place (*Chap. 20. 14, 15, 16, &c.*) wishing that he had never been born to see such presnet evils. We have the like plain wish of *David*, in the day of his trouble (*Psal. 55. 2.*) *Attend unto me (O God) and hear me, I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise ; because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked : for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me (they charged him with evils that he had not done) my heart is sore pained within me, the terrors of death are fallen upon me, fearfulness and trouble are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed, or covered me.* *David* was at that time in a very sad day, you see ; and what was his wish that day ? we have it at the 6th verse, *And I said, O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest ; lo then would I wander*

St 2.

far

far off and remain in the wilderness. Holy David could not keep his heart (in those distresses) from extravagant wishes. David had the integrity of a dove (as he often pleaded before the Lord) and being distressed, he wished also for the wings of a dove, that he might flee away, and get out of the reach of all those impendent calamities. How usual is it for good men in bad dayes to breath out such wishes? one wishes that he had never been born, rather than to see such a day; another wishes he may die presently, rather than live in such a day. When the Apostle John had given the prophesie of dreadful judgments to come upon the wicked world, or the world of wicked men, he presently tells us what their wishes or desires will be (*Rev. 9. 6.*) *And in those dayes shall men seek death, and shall not find it, and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.* Most men flee death, that's a misery; but death fleeth from some men, and that's a greater misery. They are in the worst of conditions who would have death when death will not be had. Their lives are worse than death who only wish to die. What non-sense wishes and desires had they also in the day of the Lords anger, mentioned in the same book (*Chap. 6. 16.*) Who said to the mountaines and to the rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. It is possible for good men sometimes to have strange wishes; but O how lamentable are the wishes of wicked men and unbelievers, who have no part nor interest in Jesus Christ, in those times when Conscience is wounded and awakened, or when a day of the Lords wrath, or judgment from the Lord appeareth! When Christ the Lamb shall sit upon the throne, and call them to give an account, O then they will wish for rocks and mountaines to fall upon them, that they might not appear; how glad will they then be to be hidden with an everlasting night! They cannot but desire the night, who have sinned against light. Holy Job could not forbear to desire the night of death in the day of his distress; what desires then must the wicked have, who have no hope beyond this life!

Again, as to the vanity of that design of some in desiring the night for shelter,

Note;

There is nothing can cover us from the eye, or secure us from the hand of God.

What

What is darkness to God, *who is light, and in whom there is no darkness at all* (1 John 1. 5.) *Desire not the night.* As gold and silver cannot ransom sinners, as great forces, (all the Armies on earth) forces of strength cannot help sinners, so the night cannot hide them; they that are in the grossest darkness, are never the more out of Gods sight; *The darkness is not darkness to him, the darkness and the light to him are both alike* (Psal. 139. 11, 12.) and therefore he laid before (vers. 7.) *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up to heaven thou art there, &c.* Wheresoever we are, God is, who is every where; nothing can keep us off from, or keep us out of the eye of God.

Lastly, as *the night*, is taken for death; *Desire not the night,*

Hence note;

It is a vain wish to desire death for our rescue, or escape from the evils of this life.

Death is it self an evil, the worst of natural evils. How can that help us out of our evils of trouble, which is it self the most troublesome evil? The Lord promiseth some of his people that they should die before the evil day; *Josiah* and *Hezekiah* had such promises: 'Tis a favour to die (as they did) in the assurance of eternal life, before we feel the evils of this life. But death, considered in it self, is no relief against evil; and as it is the worst of natural evils in it self, so it carrieth those who are unprepared and unprovided for it, to worse evils than any they can meet with in this life. Some desire death to escape the evils of this life, when, as soon as they die, they go to the evils of another life, which are the *second death*, such a death as hath *no second*, and descend not only to the grave, but to hell. And what hath any one got by leaving the troubles of this life, to fall into the dolours of that second secondless death! They only dream of security by death, who are unprepared to die. Death is good for none but those who are fitted for, and have by faith laid hold upon eternal life.

J O B , Chap. 36. Vers. 21.

Vers. 21. *Take heed, regard not iniquity, for this thou hast chosen rather than affliction.*

שמר
Custodire,
servavit.

IN this verse *Elihu* gives *Job* another serious admonition, or re-enforceth the former, warning him to take heed of speaking or uttering any thing rashly, unduely, or unbecomingly of God, in respect of his troubles and sufferings; and this he urgeth upon him by two sorts of arguments, as will appear when I come to handle the two following verses.

Take heed, regard not iniquity. As if he had said, *beware, be well advised what thou dost, and what thou sayest.* The word which we here render *take heed*, signifies to keep and preserve, but most properly, to prevent and keep off any evil, that it fall not upon us. The noun, from this root, signifies a *watch tower*, upon which a person stands to observe and give warning of any danger, or to descry any approaching enemy. 'Tis translated, *take heed*, as here, so (1 Kings. 2. 4.) where *David* upon his death-bed, gives counsel to *Solomon* his son and successor what to do, and how to walk in the way of the Lord, that (saith he) *the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, if thy children take heed to their ways*, that is, if they are very watchful over their ways, both as to their personal and princely walkings, if they walk in my statutes, then I will do thus and thus for them. Thus saith *Elihu*, *take heed, look about you*, have your eyes in your head, be careful. These *take heeds* are frequent in Scripture. From whence (before I come to the matter about which *Elihu* would have *Job* take heed.)

Observe;

It is our duty to be heedful.

We cannot be dutiful unless we are heedful; a headless person cannot be a faultless person. This duty runs quite through all we have to do; *take heed*, first, to the inward motions of the soul, take heed how & what you think (Pro. 4. 23.) *keep thy heart with all diligence (with all keepings, with all heedings, it is this word in the text)*
heed

heed thy heart; that is, thy first stirrings and motions unto any work. Secondly, take heed, as to the first motions of the soul, to the affections of the soul, which are soul-motions formed up and stated; take heed of your affections, how and what you desire, how and what you love, how and what you hate. Thirdly, take heed to the tongue, how you speak, and what you speak, where you speak, and why or for what ends you speak; there is a great deal of take heed belonging to the tongue. Fourthly, take heed to the ear, when ye hear others speak, take heed how you hear, and when ye hear, and what you hear; infection may soon come in at those ports. Fifthly, take heed to the eyes, what you behold; the eyes are windows which often let in vanity, yea, I may say, venome and poison into the soul. In a word, take heed of all your actions, or of your whole conversation; take heed what you do, and how you do it; see that ye walk circumspectly, take heed in and about all these things, that ye sin not, especially, that ye neither have, nor carry on any design or work that is sinful; take heed that ye be not found falling into that error, to avoid which, *Elihu* calleth or awakeneth *Job* to this watchfulness, take heed.

Regard not iniquity.

Here is the special matter in the text, about which *Elihu* advises *Job* to be heedful, *regard not iniquity*. The word rendered *regard*, signifies the turning of the face to look upon any object; that which we much regard, we turn about to look upon it, as that which we slight, we turn away from it and will not look upon it; we turn our face to a person or thing, signifying our approbation, and we turn away our face to shew our dislike; and therefore we do well express this word, which signifies to turn the face, by regarding; turn not thy face to iniquity, look not to it, give it not any respect or countenance, regard not

Iniquity.

The word signifies vanity properly. All iniquity is vanity, sin is vanity, and sin hath brought vanity into the whole creation, yea sin makes all things a vexation to us. The *Chaldee* saith, *regard not a lie*, the *Septuagint*, *regard not things absurd or uncomely*.

But what Iniquity doth *Elihu* here chiefly intend? I answer,

אֵינִי לִי
A verbo אֵינִי
quod sepe ani-
mi intentionem,
vel contemplationem valet
ad aliquem finem, utpote ad
miserandum, vel
interrogandum,
vel ad iudicandum. Bold.

אֵינִי
Iniquitas, vanitas.

אֵינִי
Absurda, indecentia.
Sept.

It is a truth of Iniquity in general, regard not any iniquity ; yet here *Elihu* speaks not in that compass ; as if he should say, regard not robbery, regard not murder, regard not adultery and wantonness, regard not any of these foul and gross sins ; but there was a special sin which *Elihu* had an aym at, and which he thought *Job* gave too much regard unto ; *regard not iniquity*, that is, undue speeches and heart-gudgings, or impatient complainings against the proceedings of God with thee ; that is, do not stand so much complaining about what thou sufferest, and justifying thy self in what thou hast done, expostulate the matter no more with God, with not for the night of death, &c. This is to regard or turn thy face to iniquity ; take heed of these things, do not regard these evils, this kind of iniquity.

Further, when *Elihu* saith *regard not iniquity*, we are to expound him by these affirmatives ; *fight it, turn from it, abhor it, loath it, despise it, reject it* ; all these affirmatives are contained in that negative, *regard not*. Frequently in Scripture, negatives intend their contrary affirmatives. When that Scripture saith, *despise not prophesying*, (1 *Thes.* 5.) the meaning is, *ye shall regard it, love it, follow it, delight in it* ; so on the other hand, when this Scripture saith, *regard not iniquity*, the meaning is, *despise and oppose iniquity to the utmost* ; *Take heed, regard not iniquity*. From this part of the verse thus opened,

Observe, First ;

It is no easie matter to keep our selves right when things seem to go wrong with us.

It is a hard thing to forbear iniquity when we are pinched with adversity ; not to speak unduely and uncomly, not to speak amiss of God, not to speak unbecoming our selves, require great caution in a day of distress. We have need to take heed of this iniquity, to be watchful in an evil day, that we neither do nor say that which is evil. *When things are amiss with us, we are very apt to speak and do amiss*. As soon as ever the hand of God toucheth us, how do we grieve ! how do we complain ! how do we murmur ! how do we repine ! O regard not this, 'tis an iniquity to be taken heed of, in a dark day, in a day of trouble, such as was upon *Job* ; as black a day was upon him, as ever upon any in the world, as to his personal condition. If such a Cedar failed, have
not

not we, poor Shrubs, reason to look about in such a day? When an affliction is very great, they that are for reputation great and strong in faith, very choice believers, experienced souldiers in the wars of Jesus Christ (when an affliction (I say) growes very great) how apt are they to be dismayed, to be out of heart, to despond, to look upon themselves as undone, and all undone! O regard not, turn from this iniquity. It should not satisfie any servant of God that he avoids gross iniquities in practise, he must make conscience of an impatient word, and order his speech aright under the rod, as well as his conversation.

Secondly, Forasmuch as *Elihu* calls this an iniquity,

Observe;

Impatient speeches render us guilty, let our afflictions and troubles be never so great.

Job's affliction was as heavy as the sand, yet *Elihu* tells him, your complainings are your iniquity. I have had occasion several times in this book to speak of the evil of complaining, under the worst and forest of afflictions, and therefore I only name it here.

Thirdly, taking iniquity in the largest notion,

Observe;

Sin deserves no respect from us.

Sinners deserve no respect, much less doth sin. 'Tis one part of the character which *David* gives of a Citizen of *Sion*, (*Psal.* 15. 4.) He is one, in whose eyes a vile person (that is, a wicked person, a person given up to his lusts) is contemned. That which makes a person vile and contemptible, is worse than a vile person, and therefore should have less respect, or more contempt from us. Remember, sin is the only thing which makes any person vile; should we then give any respect to sin? should we give respect to that which brings utter disrespect upon us? have we any reason to honour that which brings us to shame? to regard that which makes us regardless both with God and all good men? However some men are regarded with men for their wickedness, I mean with wicked men (they regard their like the more, when they are most like them) yet (I say) sin makes every man regardless with God and every good man: Therefore regard it not, yea, slight it, trample upon it. Take that

T

For

For a fourth note in the affirmative ;

Iniquity is utterly to be disregarded and abominated ;

We should abhor it and cast it out of our soules, we should throw it out of our conversation.

Note Fifthly ;

To regard iniquity is the marke of a wicked man.

As 'tis his property to disregard all good (*Psa. 26. 4.*) *he setteth not his heart to that which is good, he abhorreth not evill ;* that is, he hath no regard to the good of duty, and he hath a great regard to the evill of iniquity. His not abhorring evill is to be interpreted in the affirmative, he regards, respects evill, he prizes and values his very basest lusts before the Law and Will of God. *David* disclaimeth this base spirit (*Psa. 66. 18.*) *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear my prayers.* Now who are they whose prayers God will not hear ? We have the answer made by the blind man (*Job. 9.*) *God heareth not sinners :* whom will he hear then, seeing all are sinners ? His meaning is, he hears not *impenitent sinners*, unbelieving sinners, such as trade on in a way of sin. Thus *David* concluded, *if I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear me ;* for if I regard iniquity, I am of those sinners whose prayers God will not hear. Though *David* had done great iniquities, and had much iniquity in his heart, yet he regarded no iniquity in his heart, *If I have looked to any iniquity in my heart* (saith he) as the word is, that is, if iniquity in my heart be smiled upon, if I have pleased my self with it, if I have given it a good look, I were a wicked man, and God heareth not such.

Lastly, from these words, *Elihu* speaking thus to *Job*, a godly man, take heed, regard not iniquity,

Note ;

A godly man should take heed of doing any thing which may signifie the least respect or regard unto sin, the least respect to the least sin.

Indulge not thy self in complainings and impatience, lest thou be found to regard iniquity, as *Job* is here charged in the next words.

For this thou hast chosen rather than affliction.

Here

Here *Elihu* applieth the matter yet closer to *Job*; I have advised thee, to take heed, not to regard iniquity, and my admonition is not without cause; I do not speak at random, for I tell thee plainly, thou hast chosen this rather than affliction; that is, thou hast regarded iniquity. To choose is to regard.

This thou hast chosen rather than affliction. This, What? This sin, impatient complaining and exhortulating with God, this sin thou hast chosen. The word which we translate to choose, denotes a very serious and exact work of the soul. Choice is a deliberate act; we choose upon discussion and debate; choice is made upon trial and proof. Thus the word is used (*Exod. 17. 9.*) *Joshua* was to take chosen, approved, experienced men, to go to the war against *Amalek*. *David* gathered all the chosen men of *Israel* (*2 Sam. 6. 1.*) And thus the Lord spake to the house of *Jacob* by the Prophet (*Isa. 43. 10.*) *I have chosen thee; Where? I have chosen thee in the fire of affliction.* Affliction is a tryer, and either discovers who are fit to be chosen, or fits and prepares them to be chosen. *This thou hast chosen.*

כח
Elegit, selegit.

Rather than affliction.

But may we say that *Job* sat down, and putting his affliction in one ballance and sin in another, chose iniquity rather than affliction, or sin rather than suffering? Surely the bent of *Job's* spirit, the frame of his heart was far otherwise; nor is it consistent with a gracious state, or a state of grace, to sit down and make a perfect election of any sin, upon any terms whatsoever. Therefore the word choosing may be taken in a milder sense, or in a more moderate intendment; as if *Elihu* had said, *Thou hast spoken and done such things, thou hast behaved thy self so under thine afflictions, as that a man may say, surely thou hast chosen iniquity rather than affliction; thou hast given others great cause to judge thus of thee.* *Elihu* did not purpose to fasten this upon *Job*, that he had purposely concluded to choose sin rather than affliction; but he had taken liberty (through the violence of his temptations and the extremity of his pines) to use such impatient speeches and actings as might be interpreted, in a sense, a choosing of iniquity (that is, impatience) rather than affliction; that is, a quiet suffering of affliction. *This thou hast chosen rather than affliction, or,*

Præ afflictione i. e. magis quam afflictionem, hoc est tolerantiam afflictionis.

(As some render it) For this cause hast thou chosen any thing

T t 2

rather

rather than affliction, thou hast chosen what came next rather than affliction; or, thou hast chosen this because of thine affliction, so others read it; that is, thou hast been so preſt with thine affliction and trouble, that thou careſt not what thou chuſeſt.

Mr. Broughton thus; Beware thou lookeſt not to ſorrow, to chooſe that for thy affliction. The ſumme of all is, as if Elihu had thus beſpoken Job in this part of the verſe; O Job, whereas God requires of thee to give him glory in the humble ſubmiſſion of thy ſoul unto him, and ſitting patiently under his mighty hand, thou haſt behaved thy ſelf quite otherwiſe, thou haſt carried it ſtoutly, and uttered very bitter complainings of thy condition, thou haſt not given God the glory of his ſoveraignty, of his holineſs, juſtice, purity and goodneſs, in thy affliction, thou haſt not ſet thy ſelf to do this as thou ſhouldeſt, but thou haſt run out exceedingly, and overſhot thy ſelf; So that, I may even ſay of thee, thou haſt choſe this iniquity, rather than ſubmitted to thy affliction.

Elihu ſpeakes reprovingly, *this thou haſt choſen*; Is this a good choiſe?

Hence note, Firſt;

Sin, or that which is ſinful, ought not to be choſen whatſoever we chooſe.

As Solomon counſeleth, in the book of Proverbs, with all thy gettings get underſtanding, he meanes ſpiritual underſtanding; as if he had ſaid, *What-ever thou are getting be ſure thou get wiſdom for thy ſoul, wiſdom to ſalvation, wiſdom for eternity; in all thy gettings get underſtanding*: So I may ſay in this place, among all your chooſings be ſure you never chooſe ſin; that's not to be choſen, leave that out, or paſs that by in all your elections. This is a point of very large compaſs; it ſuits not my work here, to inſiſt much upon it, yet I ſhall take leave a little; *What-ever you choſe, chooſe not ſin. Why?*

Firſt, Sin is evil in it ſelf, and that which is (*malum in ſe*) evil in it ſelf, or evil it ſelf, is not the object of choiſe; no man is to chooſe evil, nor properly can chooſe it.

Secondly, Choſe not ſin, for ſin is an evil forbidden, the Law is againſt it, and the Goſpel too.

Thirdly, Choſe not ſin, for ſin is a diſhonour to God, and we ſhould rather chooſe to die than diſhonour God.

Fourthly, Choſe not ſin, for it brings deſtruction upon man.

Sin

Sin strictly and abstractly considered cannot properly be chosen. A rational creature cannot choose sin properly, because sin is evil; and election being the office of the Will, whose adequate object is good, sin, strictly taken, cannot be chosen. But sin is often chosen, and 'tis the choice of most men, they choose iniquity rather than affliction; iniquity is the choice and the beloved of many a mans soul. But how? It is under the pretence of something that is good; no man can choose it as 'tis evil. For though some love sin and choose sin for sins sake (such come up highest and nearest to the frame of the devil, as they that do good for goods sake come nearest to the holy Angels) yet, I say, sin is alwayes chosen under some consideration or shadow of good; and if any man choose to sin without respect to profit or gaine, yet he hath some good in his eye, namely to please himself, he would have his will, and will not let God have his will; and this is good to him who is starke naught. But usually sin is chosen upon one of these three accounts.

First, sin is very often chosen (by a mistake) for that which is good. They who (as the Apostle speaks, *Heb. 5. 12.*) are unskilful in the word of righteousness, they who have not senses exercised to discern between good and evil, are very apt to choose evil in stead of good, that is, thinking it to be good. Thus error in opinion is chosen, upon a mistake, for truth; and iniquity in practise, is chosen, upon a mistake, for duty. Of such the Prophet speaks (*Isa. 5. 20.*) *They call evil good, and good evil, they put darkness for light, and light for darkness*: which, as some do knowingly, out of perverseness of spirit; so others ignorantly, out of unsoundness of judgement, imagining that to be good which is evil, and that to be light which is nothing else but darkness, that to be sound doctrine which is error, and that holy worship which is superstition. So did Paul before he was converted, he chose iniquity, and thought he had done very well; *I thought* (saith he) *I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus Christ* (*Acts 26.*) I thought it my duty, I verily thought I ought to persecute and vex those who beleaved in Jesus, where-ever I found them. And Jesus Christ himself forewarns his Disciples (*John 16. 2.*) that the time was coming, that whosoever killed them would think they did God service. Thus many do not understand what is right, and so choose what is wrong.

Secondly,

Secondly, Others choose that which is evil, hoping that some good will come of it, that God may have some glory by it, and men themselves and others may have some advantage by it. This reproach was cast upon the Apostles and their doctrine, which St. Paul rejected with highest disdain (*Rom. 3. 8.*) *Not as we are slanderously reported, and as some affirm, that we say, let us do evil that good may come thereof, whose damnation is just.* The glory of the free grace of God will be manifested in the pardoning of our sin, come therefore (say some) let us sin our fill, that so the immeasurableness of the Lords goodness and mercy may appear. Woe to those who make such inferences, their damnation is just. To do evil upon any hopes of good by it (though it be the glory of God) subjects to the worst evil of suffering, damnation. Others choose sin; Why? They look some good will come by it, that is, some profit. If we strain our consciences to do this, we may get or keep favour with men; if we do this evil, it may gain us acceptance in the world. Many choose evil, because in doing so, they swim with the stream, and comply with the *many*, or as the Apostle speaks, with *the course of this world*; these choose evil, because they would be in the fashion of the most, they consider which way the world is like to go, and set themselves to go that way.

Thirdly, Others do evil hoping to avoid and escape danger by it; they choose the evil of sin, that they may escape the evil of punishment. As many sin for a little advantage, so others to avoid loss, and that they may sleep in a whole skin. Some will deny what they have done, to save themselves: No body can prove it against us, we will deny it, and so avoid trouble, and keep out of the reach of danger. Yea, for this cause many deny the truth and renounce the wayes of God, in which they have walked. *Demas* forsook *Paul*, he left the Church of God, that he might keep in with, and close to the world. Upon these pretences and hopes many choose evil, not meerly and barely in it self, but as it comes thus clothed: As some choose it through ignorance, so others upon hopes of getting good, and not a few upon hopes of avoiding evil, and keeping out of hazzard and harmes-way. But what-ever worldly good any gain, or danger they escape, by choosing iniquity, that choice brings them into greater danger, and subjects them to the loss of a greater good.

This

This thou hast chosen rather than affliction. The particular iniquity (as hath been shewed) was impatience.

Hence note ;

He that gives himself up to unquietness and impatience under the afflicting hand of God, chooses sin rather than affliction.

The Lord by *Moses* told his People, when they should be brought into great tribulation, because of their sin and uneven walkings, because of their breaking the Lords Statutes and Commandments (*Lev. 26. 41.*) *If they shall accept of the punishment of their Iniquity, then it shall be well with them.* If at such a time ye stand not complaining and murmuring against me, but shall well accept or take the punishment kindly, and kiss the Rod, acknowledging how you have provoked me, and walked unworthy of former mercy ; then I will shew you favour, and renew your mercies : But if in affliction you fall a murmuring, and say, surely the Lord hath cast us quite off, there's no hope, you chuse iniquity rather than affliction.

Thirdly, *Elihu* in this doth not only reprove *Job* for doing that which was very evil in it self, but he reproves him for doing that which was very evil to himself ; *this thou hast chosen rather than affliction.* As if he had said, Thou dost not know thine own good, in making this choyce. We say, *He is a wise man that understands his own good.*

Hence note ;

They make a very bad and miserable choyce for themselves, who chuse iniquity rather than affliction.

Thus *Solomon* concludes for Wisdom (*Prov. 8. 36.*) *He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul.* He that sinneth, wrongs Christ, but Christ passeth that over, and seemeth to say, I will bare your wrongs, but pray take heed to your selves, will you not love your selves ? will you not abstain from sin out of love to your selves ? *he that sinneth against me wrongs his own soul ; all that hate me (that is, my wayes) they love death :* And surely there is no great beauty in death, that we should love it and desire it. *They chuse very ill for themselves, that chuse sin,* the wages whereof is death. I grant, to chuse affliction is but a hard choyce (*affliction*

affliction is not good in it ſelf) but affliction, if choſen, may prove good; it may be very good to us, it may bring in much good to us: and therefore there is wiſdome, not only in chuſing any affliction, rather than ſin, but in chuſing ſome one affliction rather than another. But what good doth he chuſe, that chuſes ſin? Happy is the man that endures correction, or affliction, ſaith the Scripture in many places; but doth it ſay any where, *Happy is the man that commits iniquity*? If you chuſe affliction rather than iniquity, you chuſe a great deal of good. Firſt, *David* could ſay upon trial. (*Pſal. 119. 71.*) *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy ſtatutes.* Did ever *David* ſay, it is good for me that I have ſinned, which is to unlearn or break Statutes? did he ever pleaſe himſelf in thinking that he had ſinned? he did even pleaſe himſelf that he had been afflicted; that was good, becauſe he learned Commandments by it; he grew a better Scholler, then he was in that beſt learning of all, the knowledge of the Commandments of God:

Again, Secondly, *It is good to be afflicted; why? afflictions are the exerciſes of our Graces, the exerciſe of our Faith, the exerciſe of our patience, the exerciſe of our ſelf-denyal. 'Tis a good thing to have our Graces exerciſed, for thereby they are encreaſed. If you chuſe affliction, you ſhall probably have that good by it, the encreaſe of your beſt things, your Graces.*

Thirdly, Affliction purgeth out our corruptions, and that is good. Is it not good to have a diſeaſe, or an ill humour, purged out? this good comes by affliction. But doth the committing of ſin purge ſin? doth the Stock of ſin abate by ſinning? does the ill humour ſpend it ſelf? no, the ill humour rather increaſeth. When you chuſe ſin, you weaken your Graces, and cheriſh your corruptions; but when you reſuſe ſin, your corruptions weaken or ſpend their ſtrength. Do you think when you have committed one ſin, that the ſoul is made more unable to, or more averſe from the ſame or another ſin? When you have ſatiſfied the call of one luſt, will it now let you alone, and call no more? no, not at all; the more you ſin, the more you may; the more you ſin, the more doth the Stock of ſin increaſe and grow in you.

Fourthly, Affliction is a means to take us off or wean us from the World: O what a good is that! we being ſo apt to dote upon

upon it. The ſin of the Age is, falling in love with the World; therefore it may be good for us to be ſoundly afflicted, that we may be weaned from the World, and from all things in the world, and be kept, where our true intereſt is, in the boſom of Chriſt, or cloſe to him. But if you chuſe iniquity, will that take you off from the World? no; the more ſin, the more love of the World; for ſin and the World are akin, they are of a Blood; therefore the more you have to do with the one, the more you will have to do with the other.

Fifthly, Affliction brings us nearer to God. That which takes us off from the World, brings us neerer to God: this is an excellent advantage, a great good of affliction. But chuſe ſin, and will that bring us neerer to God? Sin is a departure from God: The Lord ſaith to ſinners, *Ye are departed and gone.* Sin is ſo far from bringing us nearer to God, that as all in a ſtate of ſin, are far off from God, ſo every act of ſin widens the diſtance, and puts us farther off from God.

Sixthly, Affliction is our conformity to Chriſt. If you chuſe affliction, you chuſe that which makes you look like Chriſt; for he was a man of ſorrows in this world, he was not in the ruff and jollity, in the power and pomp of this world, but low, and of no reputation, acquainted with grief all his dayes. If then you chuſe affliction rather than ſin, you chuſe conformity to Chriſt; but chuſing iniquity rather than affliction, you take up the utmoſt diſformity to Chriſt, *who knew no ſin, nor was any guile found in his mouth.* He took all our afflictions upon him, but he would not touch our ſin, as a doer of it, only as (in our ſtead) a ſufferer for it.

How great is the good of affliction! But is there any good at all in ſin? Upon all theſe conſiderations the Apoſtle ſaith, When God, the Father of ſpirits, afflicts his ſons and daughters, he doth it for their profit, that they may be partakers of his holineſs (Heb. 12. 10, 11.) The Lord afflicts us for our profit, but he doth not ſay I have let you ſin for your profit: For though the Lord is able to, and often doth, bring good out of ſin, yet not inſtrumentally, but occasionally. Therefore the Scripture attributes no profit to ſin, but ſpeaking of ſin, it ſaith, *What fruit have ye of thoſe things whereof ye are now aſhamed.* (Rom. 6. 21.) ſhew your gain; what are your advantages? what the revenues which your luſts

have brought in? what have you got by your malice, by your wrath, by your conformity and compliance with the world? have these brought you in any advantage? are you bettered by them? what fruit have you of those things, whereof you are now ashamed? Let us therefore often consider *Moses's* choyce (*Heb. 11. 25.*) *Moses* was a wise and a holy man; and what did he? He chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Herein try your spirits. Christ set two things before *Moses*; Come, *Moses*, here's affliction, you must be afflicted, and afflicted with the people of God (which are the greatest afflictions, you shall be sure to be lashed with the smartest sorest Rod in their Company) or here is *Egypt*, and all the contentments that sin can give; which will you have *Moses*? O give me afflictions with the people of God (said *Moses*) Let the world ruffle and rant in the pleasures of sin for a season, for my part I will have affliction, O give me affliction. In this choyce *Moses* approved himself a wise man, and understood his good. So did the Martyrs. Come, will you have a prison, or deny Christ? a Halter, or forsake the Faith? will you into this fire, or will you commit that iniquity? O say they, give us Prisons, Halters, Fires, rather than conform to your wickedness. Remember this Point, this is a needful Point for us at all times. I would adde these three things further about it. Chuse affliction rather than sin; why?

First, Because sin is worse than all affliction. Secondly, Because sin is the Sting of all affliction. If you are in an afflicted condition, and your consciences tell you you have been base, vile, complying with the World, and dissembling or false-hearted with God; if your hearts tell you, you have been rotten at the heart, this will be the sting of your afflictions. What is the sting of death? The Apostle answers (*1 Cor. 15. 56.*) *The sting of death is sin*. Would a man chuse a sting? Surely you chuse a sting when you chuse sin, and that which will afflict you beyond all your afflictions.

Thirdly, Sin is worse than affliction, for when God would declare his severest wrath, and bring the greatest affliction upon the children of men, when he resolves to afflict a person or a people to the utmost, he doth not say, I will make this man a poor man, or I will send plague, or sickness, or famine among this people,
but

but he saith, I will deliver him or them up into the hands of their sins, or to the power of their lusts. (*Psalm. 81. 11.*) *Israel would none of me* (saith the Lord) they were coy, they had other lovers, they would have the world, they chose sin, rather than God, and to go a whoring after the creature, rather than keep close to him. What then? *So I gave them up to their own hearts lusts.* As if the Lord had said, *Pray take your comse, you that love your own inventions, take your fill of them, you that love and would have the vanities of the world, take your fill of them.* The Lord doth not threaten them with famine and pestilence, no nor with hell, but he threatens them with sin, and leaves them to the power of iniquity. Thus he gave up the old Gentile Romans to vile affections, (*Rom. 1. 26, 28.*) Let them be victorious, let them be rich, let them subdue all Nations under their iron hands, let Rome be the Head and Mistresse of the world, and command all people, let all stoop to their power, but saith God, *I will give them up to vile affections,* they shall be basely Idolatrous, and basely wanton, and basely gluttonous, and basely drunken, and basely ambitious, and basely envious: As they were above all people of the world in outward glory and power, so God left them under the power of their lusts, and gave them up to glut themselves with wickedness; *He gave them up to a reprobate minde, to do things that are not convenient.* 'Tis the most terrible of all afflictions, when God makes a sin an affliction, and gives men up to hardness of heart, to pride, to a spirit of looseness and wantonness; here is a mischief indeed, the mischief of sin.

Lastly, Observe;

Our Avoidance of, or escape from the greatest affliction in the world, will not bear us out in the choyce of any iniquity.

We may understand and prosecute this poynt two wayes.

First, *As to guilt.* It will no way excuse us before God, to say, I forbore to do duty when commanded by God, I did evill because commanded by man, not out of any dislike of my duty, or liking of iniquity, but only to avoyd those afflictions, which I saw inevitably falling upon me, in case I had either done the one, or not done the other. This plea will not hold before God, for

any mans discharge from guilt upon either account. And though there may be some seasons wherein a duty may be laid by or omitted, yet there is no season wherein any iniquity may be chosen or committed.

Secondly, We cannot be excused, as to *Discretion*. We are fools, and act below, not only *gracious* but *rational* men, if we chuse iniquity to avoyd any affliction, whether that affliction or suffering, be, first, our own; or secondly, the suffering of others. First, though nearly related, & very near to us, wife, children, &c. Secondly, though many, never so many, a whole Nation, a whole world, the Church. I believe that assertion of *St Augustine* will be found sound and Orthodox Divinity; *Better let the world perish, than attempt to save it by telling an officious ly.*

The evil of sin is so bad that if any good could come by it (which of it self cannot) it were not worth the having: Some said in the Apostles times, & they said it of the Apostles, (*Rom. 3. 8.*) *Let us do evil that good may come of it.* God by his infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, brought good out of evil, even salvation to man out of the fall of the first man; but if any man, or sort of men, shall project the obtainment of good by the doing of evil, the Apostle in the same place hath given them this doom, *Their damnation is just*; nothing is more just or righteous, than their damnation, who hope to get good for themselves or others by doing evil, which is it self injustice and unrighteousness.

J O B, Chap. 36. Vers. 22, 23.

22. Behold, God exalteth by his power : who teacheth like him ?

23. Who hath enjoyed him his way ? or who can say, thou hast wrought iniquity ?

IN these two verses *Elihu* prosecuteth the admonition which he had given *Job* in the 21 verse, to take heed of uttering any thing rashly concerning Gods dealings with him, or, of choosing iniquity rather than affliction : And he presseth the admonition by two great arguments.

First, From the power and wisdom of God, in the 22th verse ; Behold, God exalteth by his power : who teacheth like him ?

Secondly, He urgeth it by an argument taken from the sovereignty of God, as also from his most exact Justice, (v. 23.) Who hath enjoyed him his way ? or who can say, thou hast wrought iniquity ? As if he had said, Take heed how thou accusest the Justice of God in any of his dealings with thee : If God be of such power, of such wisdom, of such sovereignty, of such integrity, then consider well what thou speakest, yea what thou thinkest of God ; beware thou speakest not a word, nor conceivest a thought amiss of him. Consider, I say, God himself, his wayes, and works, thoroughly, and thou wilt conclude with me, That though many in the world have great power, and have left the markes of it in many places, and upon many persons ; yet none like God, either, first, in doing his own work, or secondly, in directing or teaching us how to do ours.

So that *Elihu* by this report and commendation of the power and wisdom of God, seems to comfort *Job* in the assurance or hope of better things, if he would hearken to and accept his counsel ; for as God had mightily afflicted and broken him, so he was as mighty to heal those breaches, and deliver him ; he only waited to see him in a better frame, that he might be gracious, (*Isa.* 30. 18.) That's the general sum of the words.

Vers. 22. Behold, God exalteth by his power.

Some read, God is high in his own power ; that carrieth *Elihu's* reason

Eccle, deus excelsus in fortitudine sua.
Vulg: *עָלִי* excelsus est, intransitive summi potest ; anollit robur suum, i. e. robore suo excelsus est.

reason strongly in it, God is exalted in his power above all others; and therefore it is no way suitable or consentaneous unto reason, that the greater power should be questioned, much less condemned of injustice by the lesser power: There must be a parity, a co-ordination, or a co-equality at least, if not a superiority, where judgement is given. That's a great truth, *God is exalted in his own power.*

David (Psal. 21. 13.) turns it into a prayer, or wish, *Be thou exalted, O Lord, in thine own strength.* He makes a like prayer, (Psal. 108. 5.) The Lord in other places declareth himself pre-eminently in it, (Psal. 46. 10.) *Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the Heathen, I will be exalted in the Earth.* It shall be so whether men will or will not; whether men will or no, God will be exalted, because he is exalted in his own power, not in any derived power, or power given him from the creature, Men or Angels. The power which God puts forth in his works exalt him, or shew him to be a great, a mighty God. *Behold, God is exalted by his own power.*

But we translate the Text (and so I conceive it more fitly suits the scope of *Elihu*) as expressing an act of God towards others; *Behold, God exalteth by his power.* So Mr Broughton; *Mark, the Omnipotent sets up by his strength.*

Behold:

(As hath been shewed) is a note both of attention and admiration.

God.

The strong God, the potent, the omnipotent God, who is able to overcome all difficulties,

Exalteth;

שׁוּב
Elevare, exal-
tare, corroborare,
stabilem &
inconcussum
reddere.

The word which we render *to exalt*, signifieth to set in an inaccessible height, or to exalt very high; and not only so, but to establish in that exaltation, yea so to confirme and corroborate him that is set up in such a height, that no power is able to molest, trouble, or afflict him; and therefore a word coming from this root signifieth a fortified Castle or Tower; such places, if any, are exalted and lifted up on high. *Behold, God exalteth;* As if *Elihu* had

had said, *God is not only exalted in himself, he is not only lifted up beyond the reach of all creature-annoyances, but he is able to lift up others; and he doth actually exalt his when he pleaseth, beyond the reach of all danger, beyond the hurtfull power of those who hate them, and therefore have a mind to hurt them. God is so exalted above others, that he can exalt others also. He exalteth by*

His Power;

He hath the power in himself. The word which we render power, signifieth,

First, That might and strength which is corporal, the might and strength of the body.

Secondly, Inward might and strength, whether acquired or infused, the might of the mind, wisdom and pollicy.

Thirdly, Civil might and power, honour and riches. Whatever maketh a man strong, comes under the notion of this word; and every way, in all the Notions of power, God is exalted. *He exalteth by his power.*

But seeing 'tis barely asserted (*He exalteth by his power*) nothing being exprested, it may be questioned, whom doth he exalt? or what doth he exalt? I answer, Forasmuch as the Scripture leaveth it at large, and undetermined, we may apply this assertion to any, either thing or person. God exalteth whom he pleaseth, and what he pleaseth. VVe may take it distinctly these five wayes.

First, He exalteth *Himself* by his power; that is, he exalteth his own Name and Glory, which is nearest to him, yea, as himself.

Secondly, He exalteth every work which he will undertake and engage upon: He doth not only lay the Foundation of his work, and rear up the VValls a little way, but he exalteth by his power till he hath set up the *Head-stone* of his work (as the Prophet *Zechariah* speaketh, *Chap. 4. 7.*) all that love and fear him shouting and crying, *Grace, Grace, to it. He exalteth his works of Providence, as once he did his work of Creation, to full perfection.*

Thirdly, The Lord exalteth those that fear him, for they are most properly his *Favourites*; and whom should he exalt but those whom he savoureth? All the worldly exaltations of evill men,

men, are but depressions and abasements, compared with those exaltations and advancements which God intendeth for all that fear him; and some he exalteth much in this VVorld.

Fourthly, and more specially, He exalteth by his power (such *Job* then was) those that are cast down by the oppressing power of men, even the poor, and those that have no help. *Thou art he* (saith *David*, *Psal.* 9. 13.) *that liftest me up* (or *exaltest me*) *from the gates of death*. When I am perishing, when I am ready to be swallowed up with death, when I am at the greatest loss, even as to life it self, then thou liftest me up, thou liftest me up from the very gates of death. Again, (*Psal.* 18. 48.) *He delivereth me from mine enemies, yea thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me*: When they are casting me down, God is exalting and raising me up. And if God will raise up, who can keep down?

Fifthly, We may take the words in this general sense; Whosoever is exalted in this world, God exalteth him. The Sparrow cannot fall to the ground, nor the least thing or person be lifted from the ground, but by the hand of God. As he exalteth some in a way of special favour, so he exalteth the worst of men in a way of common providence: As none can be exalted if he say, no; God is able to put a barr or a stop to any mans exaltation; so he can exalt whom he will, and none are able to put a barr or a stop to their exaltation. *Behold, God exalteth by his power.*

Hence Note;

God is able to exalt any person, how low soever brought, how much soever despised.

Elihu spake this purposely to *Job*, who was in a low condition, brought (as it were) to the very gates of death; and he makes this large description of the power of God in exalting those that are cast down, purposely to comfort *Job*, to erect his spirit, and cheare his heart, with a blessed confidence, that how much soever he was at present under-foot, or under-hatches, yet he might hope for better things, even to be lifted up, if he humbled himself under the mighty hand of God. (*Psal.* 9. 9.) *The Lord will be a refuge*, (the word in the Text answers this) *or an high place, for the oppressed*. Places of refuge are usually high places, and therefore the same Hebrew word signifieth both an high place and

and a place of refuge, (*Pſal. 107. 41.*) *He ſetteth the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock.* The Prophet (*Iſa. 33. 16.*) Having ſpoken of the man that walketh in his integrity, tells us how it ſhall be with him, *He ſhall dwell on high*; The word is, *He ſhall dwell in the high places*, that is, he ſhall dwell in God, who is moſt high, for evermore; God will exalt him even to as much ſafety, as himſelf is in; *his place of defence ſhall be the munition of Rocks*; bread ſhall be given him, his water ſhall be ſure; He ſhall be houſed with God, yea houſed in God, he ſhall be fed by God, he ſhall lodge under his roof, and ſit (as it were) at his Table, he ſhall have bread enough, and water enough, and both ſure enough.

*Particeps erit
divinae felici-
tatis, atq; con-
ſors teſti co-
monſtr.*

And if the Lord exalteth thus by his power, let none be diſcouraged in their afflictions and caſtings down. The Lord alone is ſufficient, yea all ſufficient; and he exalteth not only by his will, that is, he hath not only a will to exalt, but he exalteth by his power, that is, he hath power enough to exalt whom he will. What power ſoever is in the creature, 'tis the Lords power; 'tis a ſtream from his Ocean, and when the Lord is pleaſed to remove all power from the creature, he hath a ſufficient reſerve of power in himſelf, or in his own hand, by which he can command deliverance, yea exaltation. Therefore do not ſpeak either deſpondingly or deſparingly, as if all hope were gone, when at any time all humane power is gone; *for God exalteth by his (own) power*; and as it followeth in the Text,

Who teacheth like him?

As if *Elihu* had ſaid, God is not good only at acting; but he is good at inſtructing, and he is beſt at both. He is beſt or beyond all in power; He is beſt or beyond all in wiſdome and underſtanding, and therefore *who teacheth like him?*

At the 15th verſe of this Chapter, we have the ſubſtance of what is here aſſerted, and ſo upon the matter; 'tis but the ſame thing repeated; there it is, *He delivereth the poor*; here, *He exalteth by his power*; There 'tis ſaid, *He openeth their ear to inſtruction*; here, *Who teacheth like him?* The words are a divine challenge, *Who teacheth like him?* Bring forth the man, bring forth the Angel that can. The word which here we render, *to teach*, in its firſt ſenſe ſigniſieth *to caſt a Dart, Javelin, or Stone.*

Verbum דרר
communis ad
pluriam, et ad
doctrinam, vel
legem, qua per-
funditur et ex-
colitur animus
ad fr. et bo-
norum operum.

חורר

Nullus ei simi-
lis in Legisla-
toribus. Vulg:

It signifieth also to *raine*, and so the *raine* which falls from heaven, because that is as it were, cast from the clouds to the earth. Hence by a Metaphor it signifieth to *teach* or *instruct*, because holy doctrine or instruction cometh down like raine from heaven upon the minds and hearts of those that are taught. *My doctrine shall distill as the dew, and my speech shall drop as the raine*, said *Moses* (Deut. 32. 1.) And hence the whole Law of God is expressed by a word in the Hebrew coming from this roote, that being powred down from heaven in showres of doctrine to make men fruitfull in every good word and work. In answer to which, some translate this latter part of the verse, *There is no Law-giver like unto him.* Who is a Law-giver like him? or there is no Law-giver like him. To give Law, or to be a Law-giver, is more than barely to be a teacher, though he that teacheth, doth also (in a sense) give Lawes.

Here, I conceive, we take the fittest and most suitable signification of the word, when we render it by *teaching*, *Who teacheth like him?* As if he had said, None can teach like God, and therefore surely none can teach him how to governe the world, or to dispose of any mans person or condition, as thou, O *Job*, hast rashly or overboldly done; for while thou hast complained so much and so often of his dealings with thee, thou hast (upon the matter) attempted to teach him. But, *Who teacheth like him?* Where shall we find any able to give instruction, and apply doctrine like God? God is exalted infinitely in power, and yet he condescends to be a teacher, or an instructor; God doth not stand upon his power only, he saith not, I have power to do what I will, I can force all men to my will, or break them if they will not, but he instructs and perswades, he labours to allure the soul into a right understanding of his will, and submission to it. *Who teacheth like him?*

Hence note;

First, *The great goodness of God; that he who hath all power to command. should yet vouchsafe to instruct; that he who is the Judge, will also be the Teacher of his People.*

This is the great Promise in the Covenant of grace, *They shall be all taught of God* (John 6. 45.) Some things may be known by

by the light of nature, of which knowledge God is the Author, in the same sense, as he is of all natural Powers and faculties. But here *Elihu* intends a spiritual knowledge, both of God and of our selves, or a teaching of divine things by divine chastenings, both with respect to what we should do and desire, as also with respect to what we should shun and avoid, which is the work of God alone by his grace and Spirit. Thus *David* shews how God is teaching while he is chastening (*Psal. 99. 12.*) *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest out of thy Law.* God teacheth, First, by his Word, (that's his ordinary way of teaching) Secondly, he teacheth by his Works; and those both the workes of Creation and of Providence, and by those, whether workes of Mercy or of Judgement: By all these meanes God teacheth. But that which *Elihu* chiefly aimeth at in this place (speaking to afflicted *Job*) is his teaching by affliction, *Who teacheth like him?* As if he had said, God doth not lay his hand upon thee by affliction, only to make thee smart, but to make thee wise; he is instructing thee while he is afflicting thee. Further, as God teacheth by his Word and by his Works, so he teacheth most eminently by his Spirit, who alone maketh the teaching both of his Word and of his Works effectual upon the hearts of the hearers and beholders. Many are taught, but none to purpose, without the Spirit. *Who teacheth like him?*

Note Secondly;

God is no ordinary teacher; The teachings of God are above all other teachings; There is no teacher to be compared with God.

Elihu doth not say, *Who teacheth besides God?* There are many other teachers, but there is not one who teacheth like him. Some may say, wherein doth the excellency of divine teaching lie? how hath that the supereminence above all other teachings? Take the answer briefly in seven words.

First, none teacheth so plainly and clearly as God. The teachings of men are but dark and obscure to the teachings of God. *Christ* said (*John 16. 26.*) *I shall no more speak unto you in parables, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.* God speaks by his Word and Spirit to the lowest and meanest understanding.

Secondly, none teacheth like God; that is, so mildly, so moderately, so condescendingly to the condition and capacity of those with whom he hath to do. Christ said (*John 16. 12.*) *I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now; and therefore I will not say them now, I will not burden you beyond your strength.* I know what lessons, what instructions you are fit for, and I will give you only these and no more, till ye are better prepared to receive them; I will give you only milk because ye are children, and so not able to digest strong meat.

Thirdly, none teacheth like God, so patiently and meekly. There is nothing doth more provoke the passion of a teacher, than the untowardness and dulness of those that are taught. It was a very good Rule given by one of the Ancients, *he that will teach children, must in a manner be a child*; He must consider what they are, and forme himself to their condition, *else he will never have the patience to teach them.* O with what patience doth the infinite and only wise God teach his children! (*Isa. 28. 9, 10.*) *He giveth line upon line, and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little.* Here is the patience of God; He doth not say, if ye cannot take it now, I will teach you no more; No, saith God, I will give precept upon precept, and line upon line; though former precepts have not been received, yet I will give you more, *here a little and there a little*, ye shall have another little to the former little. God was forty yeares tutoring and teaching the Israelites in the wilderness, to fit them for the possession of Canaan. These three yeares, saith Christ, *have I come looking for fruit*, and all that while he was teaching them, to make them fruitfull; nor was he hasty then, but upon the intercession of the vineyard-dresser, waited one year more. O the patience of God in teaching!

Fourthly, none teacheth like him, that is, so constantly and continually; He teacheth, and he is alwayes teaching; there is no hour, no moment, but one way or other God is teaching; By every thing we hear, or have to do with, in the wayes of his providence, he is teaching us. Besides, how constant is God in teaching us formally, as 'tis said, in the Prophet (*Jer. 35. 14, 15.*) *I have sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early, and sending them*; As if the Lord did bestir himself in the morning, to send out teachers beimes. *He soweth his seed in the morning, and in the evening he doth not withhold his hand*, as he requireth us to do

do in all sorts of duty ; whether of charity and righteousness, towards our neighbour, or, of piety and holy worship towards himself (*Ecdl. 11. 6.*)

Fifthly, *none teacheth like him*, that is, so truly, so unerringly. While men teach they sometimes mis-teach, while they lead, they often mis-lead ; they teach error for truth, and unsafe doctrine for sound ; they build wood, hay and stubble, instead of gold, silver, precious stone, upon that sure foundation Jesus Christ (*1 Cor. 3. 12.*) The best, the wisest, and most knowing men may erre ; only God knoweth the full compass of all mysteries, yea he is Truth ; therefore his teachings are most true.

Sixthly, *none teacheth like him* ; that is, so *authoritatively*. Men teach in the name and authority of God ; but God teacheth in his own name and authority. The Lord giveth Authority to his own word. If the Lord hath said it, that's warrant enough to receive it and believe it. When Christ preached, the people wondered at his doctrine (*Mat. 7. 29.*) *For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes* ; that is, there went forth a mighty command with the word of Jesus Christ ; He did not, as I may say, beg attention and submission to his doctrine, but exact it upon them, and draw it from them. Where God teacheth, he commandeth, his word worketh mightily ; when he speaketh, all must hear at their peril. Where Princes give the rule and publish their Laws, subjects must hear and obey, or suffer for not obeying : How much more where God gives the Rule, and publisheth his Law !

Seventhly, who teacheth like him ? that is, so *effectually*, so efficaciously. As God hath authority to charge his teachings upon us at our peril to receive them, so he hath a power to work our hearts to the receiving of them. Who teacheth thus like God ? The Ministers of Christ teach in the authority of God, and charge all to receive what they say in his Name, but they cannot give an effect to the charge (*Isa. 48. 17.*) *He teacheth to profit*. One translation saith, *He teacheth things profitable*. But that is a lean rendering, for so doth every Minister that teacheth as he ought ; but our rendering carrieth the efficacy of the word of God in it, *He teacheth to profit* ; that is, he can make the dullest Scholar learn, he can make the most stubborn heart to submit. Christ speaking of this great work of God in teaching,

saith

saith (*John 6. 45.*) *No man cometh unto me, except the Father draw him.* What is that drawing? It is this teaching, as ye may see (*vers. 45.*) *Every one therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.* That is, every one whom the Father hath vouchsafed to teach and instruct, *that man cometh to me, that is, he believeth and obeyeth the Gospel, and submitteth both in judgment and practise.* Every one that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh to me: *There is not one whom God hath undertaken to teach, that doth miscarry.* (*Isa. 32. 4.*) *The heart of the rash shall understand knowledge;* or, the heart of the hasty. Now hasty and rash persons, are heady and inconsiderate persons, and therefore none of the wisest; they usually have little judgment or discretion, who are much in passion; but God can make the heart of the rash to understand knowledge; that is, he can make them understand and know things aright, who seem most incapable of, and are naturally at the greatest distance from a rightness of knowledge and understanding.

To close the Point, take these inferences from the whole.

First, If God be such a teacher, then *stay not in the bare teachings of men.* What are the teachings of men to the teachings of God? Though you should have an Angel from heaven to speak to you, yet stay not in his teachings, wait for the teachings of God. Till ye are taught of God ye never learn to purpose. Set yourselves, not only as in Gods presence, but as under his Spirit, to be taught; wait for the moving of the Spirit in every ordinance, as they did for the Angels moving of the waters, who lay at the poole of *Bethesda* for healing (*Joh. 5. 4.*)

Secondly, Seeing God teacheth thus paramount, seeing *none teach like him*, then *submit to his teaching.* Do not question any of his rules of life or doctrines of faith, they are all righteous and full of divine truth; you cannot do amiss if you do, nor believe amiss if you believe, no, nor miss of blessedness in doing and believing, what he hath taught.

Thirdly, *Then appear as they who are taught of God.*

You will say, How, or when doth it appear, that we are or have been taught of God? I shall answer that query in four things.

First, If you are or have been taught of God, *his teaching unteacheth* or empyerh you, & that in a threefold respect. First, of your own carnal principles. The great business of divine teaching, is to unteach,

teach, to take men off from their own Will and Reason, from their own Rules, as also from those Customes which they have received by tradition from their fathers. If you would appear as taught of God, you must lay down all these. The teachings of grace empty the soul of what it hath taken up by Nature. Secondly, the teachings of God empty the soul of all self-righteousness. If ye be taught of God ye will be nothing in your selves. Paul, before the teachings of God came, had confidence in the flesh, and boasted in his own righteousness; but when he was taught of God, he threw off all those. Thirdly, If ye are taught of God, that will certainly unteach and empty you of all unrighteousness. The Apostle speaks fully to that (Ephes. 4. 20, 21.) *Ye have not so learned Christ, if so be that ye have been taught as the truth is in Jesus.* If ye have been divinely taught, then this teaching hath emptied you of the old man; as of all self-righteousness so of all unrighteousness towards others. It is impossible any should take in the teachings of God, and yet hold any sinfull practisings.

Secondly, divine teachings, as they empty and unteach the soul, so they keep it very humble. Knowledge endangers us naturally to high thoughts of our selves, and hath a tendency in it to pride (1 Cor. 8. 1.) *Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.* Take knowledge barely as received of men, even the knowledge of divine things (for ye may have a humane knowledge of divine things) this usually makes the heart swell; but the knowledge we have from the teachings of God, makes us humble, it will cause us to cry out (as the Prophet did, when the Lord appeared and let out a more than ordinary manifestation of his glory, (Isa. 6. 5.) *we are undone.* It was so with Job, when the Lord had schooled him, and made himself more fully known to him than ever before, he presently cried out (Chap. 41. 5.) *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor my self in dust and ashes.* Nothing keeps the soul so humble as the teachings of God. Where we see any proud of what they have learned, it is an argument that either they were never taught of God, or, that as yet they have not understood his teachings.

Thirdly, The teachings of God do not only empty and humble the soul, but they transform the soul, and change it into another thing than it was, as to its state and qualities. The teachings of
God

God change not only our manners but our very natures; they not only give a light to the Understanding, but a newness to the Will, new Affections, new Desires. This is it which the Apostle calls *the new creature* (2 Cor. 5. 17.) and that this creature is wrought to its highest perfection by the teachings of God, he sheweth (2 Cor. 3. 18.) *We all with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. The glass wherein we have this sight of the glory of God, is chiefly the Word. The glory into which we are changed by those sights, is our conformity to that holiness which shineth in the Word. And this change is twofold; First, from sin to grace, which is a degree of glory. Secondly, from glory to glory, that is, from a high to a higher, and at last to the highest degree of grace. Look what the Word is, and calleth us to be, that are we when taught according to the truth of the word, by the power and Spirit of God.*

Fourthly, The teachings of God confirm the soul in that which is taught, or we have learned. If God teach any divine lesson, that will stick. We receive many lessons from men, and let them slip, as the Apostles word is (Heb. 2. 1.) Doctrine taught us of God settles upon us, we hold the substance of it, and hold forth the fruit or power of it in every season of our lives: yea, if trouble or persecution arise for the truth, they who are taught of God will hold it fast, though they let go all they have in this world for it. If God teach us the doctrine of Free Grace, how we are justified by the righteousness of Jesus Christ, without our own works; If God teach us the doctrine of pure Worship, how he is to be served, and honoured according to his own will, without the Traditions of men, (as Christ spake (Mat. 15. 9.) If (I say) God teach us these, or any other saving truths, we cannot but hold them: whereas they who have received them from men will part with them on the account of man. Only that which God hath taught us abideth with us, and that no man can take from us. Men may take the life of such a one from him, which God hath given him, but they cannot take the truth from him which God hath taught him. What God teacheth, is written, as it were, with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond, it is graven upon the tables of the heart for ever. Thus we may in some measure discern who are taught of God; and seeing they who
are

are taught of him, are so taught, we may very well insist upon *Elihu's* challenge; *Who teacheth like him?* And as there is no teacher like God, so neither is there any ruler like God; this also is taught us by *Elihu*, as a matter out of question, while in the next verse he proceeds to make more questions, or two questions more.

Vers. 23. *Who hath enjoyed him his way? or who can say, thou hast wrought iniquity?*

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Propheta.

This verse holds out two things. First, the sovereignty; Secondly, the integrity of God. God is supreme in power, and he is righteous in the use of his power, and therefore, O *Job*, thou hast much forgotten both thy self and him, in making so many complaints about thy condition, which is indeed to enjoin God his way, or prescribe to him how he shall govern the world. And seeing no man hath enjoyed God his way, who can question him about it, what way soever he is pleased to take, either with whole Nations, or with any of the sons of men.

Who hath enjoyed him his way, or, visited him?

No man hath, no man can, enjoy him his way. God hath no visitors over him. Mr. Broughton renders, *Who gave him charge over his ways*. Like that, Chap. 34. 13.

The way of God is any course which himself taketh, either in governing the world in general, or any person in particular; who shall instruct him about either what or how he shall do, whom he shall spare, whom he shall punish, whose heart he shall soften, whose he shall harden, whom he shall save, whom he shall destroy, how he shall teach, which way he shall lead; in a word, how he shall administer justice and order any of his matters? all must be bound to and by his Lawes, he cannot be bound to or by the lawes and precepts of any, either in works of Judgment or of Mercy, either in doing good to and for man, or in dealing out of evil. Further,

Who hath enjoyed him his way? By the way of God we may understand both the actions of God themselves, as also the reasons moving him to those actions. As if *Elihu* had said, *Who hath taught God what to do? Who hath, or who can direct him what to do? Who may be so bold with God, who is the sovereign Lord over all*

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the earth, thus to enjoyn him his way?

Hence note;

God is the first mover of all that himself doth;

No man hath shewed him or enjoyed him his way. He is the fountain of light, he seeth what to do; who hath been his counsellor? (1 Cor. 2. 16.) that is, no man hath, or may instruct him (Isa. 40. 13. Rom. 11. 34.) Again, he is the fountain of power; none hath authority to direct him, he is above all; as he needs not the counsel of any, so he receiveth the rule from none. I have had occasion more than once in the process of this Book, to say somewhat of the sovereignty of God over all creatures, and therefore only remind it here, *Who hath enjoyed him his way?*

Or who can say, thou hast wrought iniquity?

The world is full of iniquity, but in God there is none at all. As God is not obliged to give any men an account of his works, so no man can find any, the least, real fault or defect in any of them; and if his works do not appear so to us now, yet at last they will appear to all without any shadow of iniquity. Samuel called together the Israelites, and demanded (1 Sam. 12. 3.) *Whose ox have I taken? &c. Whom have I defrauded? &c.* Come charge me, witness against me; who can say, I have wrought iniquity? It was much, and a rare thing for Samuel to carry it so justly, that none could challenge him; but when all the world shall be summoned before God, he will be able to put the question, Who of all the sons of men, can say, I have wrought iniquity? None can say it, but with utmost impudency and highest blasphemy. It is impossible for God to work iniquity; not only is his Command, but his Will totally against it. What-ever God works is according to his own Will, and his Will is the Rule of Righteousness; therefore he *can do no iniquity*. There is no iniquity in acting or working according to the Law. If men act according to their will, they usually act iniquity, because their will is not a Law, and is seldom conformed to the Law. The will of no man is so right, or so fixed in the right, as to be received for a Law. But seeing what-ever God doth, he doth it according to his own Will, and his Will is the righteous Rule of all things, therefore all must be right

right which he doth : Who-ever took him tripping in his dealing?
Who can ſay, he hath wrought iniquity ?

But why doth *Elihu* ſpeak thus to *Job* ? Had he ever ſaid that God works iniquity ?

I anſwer, He had not. Yet becauſe he thought God might have done better by good men, or have given out that which was more ſuitable to their eſtate, than ſuch continual ſorrows and afflictions as he endured, therefore this ſaying is deſervedly impured to him. For, it would have become *Job*, and doth every man, to ſay, that is beſt done which God doth, and that he hath choſen or pitched upon the beſt, and moſt proper meanes of doing his own choiſeſt ſervants good, even when 'tis worſt with them in the world, or, when he afflicts them with the greateſt evils ; For, *Who can (then) ſay, he hath wrought iniquity ?*

Hence obſerve ;

Fiſt, *The infinite purity of God, as alſo his love to righteouſneſs and juſtice ;*

Who, though he be ſo abſolute in power, that none can call him in queſtion (*none can enjoy him his way*, and therefore none can queſtion him for his way) yet he is ſo perfect in righteouſneſs, that no fault can be found in him, nor any error in his way. *Though the Lord hath power to do what he will, yet he hath no will to do wrong with his power.* The Lord neither doth nor can do wrong to thoſe who have, to their power, continually wronged him. And indeed, he that hath all power in his hand, can have nothing but right in his heart. How few are there in power (though their way be injoynd to them, though they have power meerly by commiſſion, from ſuperior powers, though their power be ſuch as they are to give an account of, yet, I ſay, how few are there in power) who do not much iniquity, who do not, either for want of better information, or, of a better conſcience, oppreſs, grieve and afflict thoſe that have to do with them, or are ſubject to them ! God may do what he will, yet will do nothing but what is right. *How infinitely then is God to be exalted in his truth and righteouſneſs ! And thus the word of truth exalts him (Deut. 32. 4. 2 Chr. 19. 7. Rom 9. 14.)* There is no unevenneſs, much leſs aberration in any of the ways of God, he never trod awry, nor took a falſe ſtep ; *Who can ſay unto him (without great iniquity) thou haſt wrought iniquity.*

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Hence

Hence we may infer ;

If God works no iniquity in any of his wayes, whether in his general or special providences, Then,

All ought to sit down quietly under the workes of God. Though he bring never so great judgments upon nations, he doth them no wrong ; though *he break his people in the place of dragons, and cover them with the shadow of death,* he doth them no wrong ; *Though he sell his own people for nought,* yet he doth them no wrong. All which, and several other grievances, the Church sadly bemoans (*Psal. 44.*) yet without raising the least dust, concerning the justice of God, or giving the least intimation of iniquity in those several sad and severe wayes.

Secondly, We should not only sit down quietly under all the dispensations of God, as having no iniquity in them, *but exalt the righteousness of God in all his dispensations, as mingled also, & sprinkled with mercy.* Though we cannot see the righteousness of God in some of them, yet we must believe he is not only so, but merciful in all of them, though the day be dark, & we cannot discern how this or that suits with the righteousness, much less with the goodness and mercy of God, yet sit down we ought in this faith, that both this and that is righteous, yea, that God is good to *Israel*, in the one and in the other. When the prophet was about to touch upon that string, he first laid down this principle as unquestionable (*Jer. 12. 1.*) *Righteous art thou, O Lord, yet give me leave to plead with thee about thy Judgments : Why doth the way of the wicked prosper ?* Why is it thus in the world ? I take the boldness to put these questions, O Lord, yet I make no question but thou art righteous, O Lord. It becomes all the sons of men to rest patiently under the darkest providences of God. And let us all, not only not charge God foolishly, but exalt him highly, and cry up both his righteousness and kindness towards all his people ; For *who can say to God, thou hast wrought iniquity ?* Having in several other passages of this book, met with this matter also, I here briefly pass it over.

J O B, Chap. 36. Vers. 24, 25.

24. Remember that thou magnifie his work, which men behold.

25. Every man may see it, man may behold it a-far off.

THese two verses contain the third advice, counsel or exhortation given by Elihu to Job, stirring him up to give glory to God in his providential proceedings with him.

There are three things considerable in these two verses.

First, The general duty commanded, which is, to magnifie the work of God.

Secondly, We have here a special reason or ground of that duty; the visibility and plainness, yea, more than so, the illustriousness of his work. The work of God is not only such as some men may see, but such as every man may see, yea, behold a-far off.

Thirdly, We have here an incentive to provoke to this duty, in the first words of the Text, Remember.

Vers. 24. Remember that thou magnifie his work, which men behold.

To Remember imports chiefly these two things.

First, to call to mind what is past (Mat. 26.75.) Then Peter remembered the words of Christ.

Secondly, To remember, is to keep somewhat in mind against the time to come; in which sense the Law runs (Exod. 20.8.) Remember the rest-day; that is, keep it in mind, that when-ever it cometh, or upon every return of that day, ye may be in a fit posture and preparation for it; Remember the rest, or sabbath day to keep it holy.

To remember in this place, is set (I conceive) in a double opposition: First, To forgetfulness of the duty here called for; remember and do not forget it. Secondly, To the slight performance of the duty here called for; the magnifying of the work of God.

Remem-

Remember that thou magnifie.

As if he had said, Be thou daily and duely affected with it, do not put it off with a little, or a bare remembrance: the matter is weighty, consider it fully. As if Elihu had said to Job, Thou hast much forgotten thy self, and gone off from that which is thy proper work. I have heard thee much complaining of the workes of God, but thy work should have been to magnifie the work of God. Though God hath cast thee down and laid thee low, yet thy business should have been to exalt the work of God; Remember, it would much better become thee to act another part than this; thou shouldest have acted the part of a magnifier of the work of God, not the part of a complainer against it. Remember that thou

Magnifie;

תְּמַגִּיד
i. e.
תְּמַגִּיד
Augeras, extol-
las ejus opus,
non accusas ut
nunc facis.
Merc.

The root signifieth, to encrease and extol. We may consider a twofold magnifying of the work of God. There is an inward magnifying of the work of God; and there is an outward magnifying of the work of God.

First, There is an inward magnifying of the work of God, when we think highly of it; thus did the Virgin in her song (Luke 1. 46.) My soul doth magnifie the Lord. Her heart was raised up, and stretched out in high thoughts of God.

Secondly, There is an outward magnifying of the work of God. To speak highly of his work is to magnify his work; to live holily and fruitfully is to magnifie his work. We cannot make any addition to the work of God, there is no such magnifying of it; but we must strive to give the works of God their full dimension, and not lessen them at all. As we must not diminish the number of his works, so we must not diminish the just weight and worth of them. There is such a charge of God to the Prophet about his word (Jer. 26. 2.) Go tell the people all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word. Deliver thy message in words at length, or in the full length of those words in which it was delivered unto thee. We then magnifie the work of God, when we diminish not a tittle.

As we cannot add any thing to it, so we must neither abate nor conceal any thing of it. To magnifie is not to make the works of God great, but to declare and set forth the greatness of them; that's

that's the magnifying here especially intended. Remember that thou magnifie his works.

I shall not stay upon that other reading, Remember that thou art ignorant of his work. The same word which we translate, to magnifie, with the variation of a point, signifieth to erre; hence that translation. There is a profitable sense in it; for indeed the best knowledge which we have of the work of God may be called ignorance, and we said to be ignorant of that work which we are most knowing in. Yet because this is straining of the Text, I pass it by, and keep to our own rendring, Remember that thou magnifie

His work.

What work? Here is no work specified, therefore I answer;

First, All the workes of God are here included; Magnify his work. What-ever is a work of God, what-ever hath the stamp and inscription of God upon it, see that thou magnifie it.

Secondly, and more specially, We may understand this work of God to be the work of Creation, the goodly structure and fabrick of this visible world; and indeed that's a work so great and magnificent, that it ought to be continually remembered and magnified.

Thirdly, Others restrain it more narrowly, to that part of the work of God which is eminent in the heavenly meteors, and wonderful changes in the air, together with the motions and influences of the stars; of which we shall find *Elihu* discoursing at large, like a divine Philosopher, in the next Chapter. There are strange works of God in these lower heavens, where those meteors are born and brought forth; Remember to magnifie those works.

Fourthly, I rather conceive (though such works of God are afterward spoken of) that *Elihu* intends the work of Providence in both the appearances of it, as it is a white or black work, as it is for good or for evil, as it is in judgment or in mercy. A moderate Interpreter pitcheth upon the former, and upon one particular of the former; as if *Elihu* had directly led *Jobs* thoughts back to the Deluge, that work of God in bringing the Flood upon the old world; and if we can but go back and honour God for his past works of Providence, we shall magnifie him for his present.

Memento quod ignores opus ejus. Vulg. Hieronimus confundit NJW cum NJW quam NJW potius errare quam ignorare significat. Draf.

Hujus mundi opificium intelligo. Bold.

ferit. As if *Elihu* had said; *Thou complaineſt that thou art overflowed with a deluge of afflictions; but doeſt thou remember how God deſtroyed the whole world at once in the univerſal flood?* But though I think, that may be taken in among other works, yet to reſtraine it to that is a great deal too narrow for this Text. *Therefore under this work of God, we may comprehend any great work of God, which is upon record, or which we have heard of, wherein he hath ſhewed his power, wiſdome, and juſtice.*

Remember his work;

The work of providence. Thoſe works of providence which are afflictive, have a great place in this Text, becauſe the perſon ſpoken to was one in an afflicted condition. And I conceive *Elihu* directs *Job* not ſo much to magnifie God for the day of proſperity and Sun-ſhine which he once had, as for the day of adverſity and darkneſs, which then covered him. *Remember that thou magnifie his work,*

Which men behold,

Which the ſons of *Enoſh* behold, ſaith *Mr Broughton*. But the word *Sons* is not in the Text, there 'tis only *men*, or *weak men*. The word which we tranſlate to *behold*, hath a double ſignification, and that hath cauſed a double tranſlation: It ſignifieth, *fiſt, to ſing*; ſecondly, *to ſee or behold*. It is tranſlated by ſeveral in the former ſenſe, *Remember that thou magnifie his work, whereof men have ſang*; The Chaldee Paraphraſe ſaith, *For which juſt men have given praiſe* in *Pſalmes* and ſongs. Beholding fully a good thing, and praiſing it, or praiſing God for it, go together, as *Mr Broughtons* gloſſe expreſſeth it out of *Ramban*. *Gracious and holy men do not only ſpeak, but ſing the wonderful works of God; And, that praiſes were in ſong or verſe, both the Scriptures and many ancient Authors teſtifie.* God works, and men ſing the praiſes of God for his works, as *Moses, David, and Deborah* did. And we find all the Saints (*Rev. 15. 3.*) ſinging praiſes to the Lord for the great work which he will do in bringing forth Judgement to perfection upon *Babylon*. Thus it is a truth, the work of God is to be ſung and ſet forth in meeter, or in verſe.

We take the other tranſlation, *Which men behold*; which, with reſpect to that which followeth (*v. 25.*) where both expreſſions refer

De quo cecine-
runt viri.

Quod lauda-
runt juſti viri.
Chald:

refer to the eye, is, I conceive, most proper. *Magnifie the work of God, which men behold*; As if *Elihu* had said, O *Job*, I advise thee to leave off searching into the secrets of God, and set thy self to consider and magnifie those works of God which are plain and lye open to every mans eye.

The word rendred *Behold*, may note, both a transient, and an intense or fixt beholding, to look wishly as we say, to look fastning the eye solicitously, yea, it imports, not only to behold with the eye of the body, but with the eye of the mind.

Some Interpreters put an Emphasis upon the word *men*, as noting excellent men, vertuous men, men of verrue in their qualities, and of excellency in their abilities; such are men indeed, worthy men, worthy the name of man; as it hath been said of old, *Where there are no men, do thou play the man*, act and speak like a man. Some men have nothing but the outside of a man. This is a good notion. For good men, holy men, men of divine excellency, are most quick-sighted, and quick-sented; First, espying the appearances of God in any of his providences, and then making a due improvement of them. Therefore (saith *Elihu*) *magnifie his work, which men*, that is, holy and good men, *behold* and take notice of. *David* speaking of the works of God in that notable place, (*Psal. 92. 6.*) saith, *A brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand this; that is, such a one as he, cannot behold the work of God.* And therefore it is more than a criticisme to restraine the word *men*, to men of this sort; yet it must be granted that the word signifies not only excellent men, but any sort of men, whether wise or foolish, rich or poor, and the weaker sort of men more specially than the stronger and more poble in any kind.

And to take the word in that universality, as compassing and comprehending all sorts of men, even those who are dim sighted, blear-eyed, that is, of weakest understanding, may be a good improvement of the Text, implying, that as some of the works of God are so mysterious, that the wisest cannot see the meaning of them, so many, very many, of his works are so manifest, that common men may compass them. *Magnifie his works, which men behold.*

The works of God are of two sorts, visible and invisible.

First, Such as we see or know by sight: Thus the works of

Z z

Creation,

Quæ viderunt non homines sed viri præstantes, ut sit nomen æquum. Sic alibi, in loco ubi non sunt viri, virum te præstas. Drus.

¶ *Non tam excellentes, quam miseros et plebeios, vel omnes omnino homines significat.*

Creation, and the works of Providence, his present providences, are such as we behold, they are visible works.

Secondly, There are invisible works of God, which we cannot behold, but must believe, and can know only by faith; such are his spiritual works, or what he works upon or in the spirits of the children of men: These are written in too small a letter for the eye of Nature to behold; none can see them or behold them but by an eye of faith, or spiritual understanding. The works of regeneration and sanctification (for which God is wonderfully to be magnified) may be seen or beheld in the fruits and effects of them, in those they are very visible, but they cannot be seen in themselves. The past and future providences of God cannot now be seen by the eye, but by faith they may, and we ought to believe that such things were wrought, and shall be wrought; we are to receive the testimony given by faithful History, that such things were done, though we never saw the doing of them, and we are to receive the sure word of Prophecy that such things shall be done, though we live not to see the doing of them. The work of God intended here by *Elihu* is a visible work, therefore it must fall among his providences.

Vers. 25. *Every man may see it.*

כל אדם
Omnes homines
in quibus est
vel mica bonae
mentis. Merc:

That is, say some, every wise and understanding man; but rather, any man, (as was touched at the former verse) if he be but a man of common understanding, if he have any spark of Reason left in him unquencht, if he have his eyes in his head, he may see it; the eye of every one who will not shut his eyes against the light, must needs see it. We say, *who so blind as they that will not see.*

Man may behold it afar off.

שאר
חוק
נבט

The word here rendred *Behold*, is not the same which we translate *Behold* in the former verse, nor is it the same word which signifyeth to see in the former part of this verse. Some make a difference between *seeing* in the former part of the verse, and *Beholding* in the latter. Holy and good men see the works of God clearly and distinctly, they look on them with delight and contentment; the common sort of men only behold them, first, darkly, as at a distance; secondly, confusedly and in grosse. *Man may behold it* *Afar*

Afar off.

There is a four-fold conception about that *afar off*.

First, Some expound it for *afar off in time*. The work of God doth not weare out; that first and great visible work of Creation which was from the beginning, yet remaineth. Ages pass away, but the work of God doth not pass away, though done some hundreds, yea thousands of years ago.

Secondly, *Afar off*, that is, imperfectly, not fully; he may have some discoveries of it, every man the weakest man may discern somewhat of it. Things that are high and *afar off*, are confusedly seen, not clearly or fully discerned. A map that is *afar off* cannot be distinguishingly knowne. When a man is *afar off*, we may see him to be a man, but what manner of man he is, or who he is, we cannot discern; though possibly it may be our own father, yet being *afar off* we cannot know him distinctly. Thus to see *afar off* notes only a confused knowledge. That's a good sense; things *afar off* are not distinctly seen.

Thirdly, *Afar off*, may be expounded of all the sight we have on this side Heaven. In this world we see all that we see *afar off*, we have not a near intimate knowledge of things, especially not of the best things, spiritual things, of all them we must say, *We know but in part, and see thorow a glasse darkly*, as the Apostle speaks, (1 Cor. 13. 12.) Such things as are not immediate to us, we are said to see thorow a glasse, or as represented in their effects, and issues, or in their *back parts*, as God himself is seen. (Exod. 33. 18, 23.) *Thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen*, said God to Moses when he moved to see his glory.

Fourthly, This beholding *afar off*, may note the greatness of the work of God, the exceeding lightsomness and gloriousness of it. Those things that are great, may be seen a great way off. A high Tower is seen *afar off*. We hardly believe the doctrine and reports of Astronomers, how far off the Sun is, which every eye beholds. Though the Sun be so many thousand miles distant, yet any man may see it, 'tis so great, so beautiful, so bright a body. Many of the works of God have such a beauty, radiancy and luster in them, that any that are not stark blind may see them *afar off*. Remember that thou magnifie his work, which men behold.

Z z 2

Every

פירוש

A Longe.

Mont:

Primus, i. e. a

formatione

mundi huc usque

Rab: Solo-

moth.

Non plane

perspicitur ratio-

nem ejus.

Pisc:

E longinquo.

i. e. ex poste-

rioribus et ef-

fectibus. Merc:

Every man may see it, man may behold it afar off. From the context of these two verses, note,

First, *We are very apt to forget our duty in giving God the glory of his works.*

The *memento* or remember at the beginning of the verse is no more than needs. We have bad memories for any thing that's good, especially for the good word and the good works of God. We are so far from magnifying his work, that we often forget his work. 'Tis said of Israel (Psal. 106. 13.) *They soon forgot his works.* If we soon forget the works of God, we shall sooner forget to magnifie God for his work. Many remember the work of God, who do not magnifie it, nor him for it; but none can magnifie the work of God, nor God for his work, who do not remember it.

Secondly, In that the Text saith, *Remember that thou magnifie, not only that thou speak of, or declare his work, but magnifie it.*

Note;

We usually have low apprehensions of the work of God.

While we remember it, we do not magnifie it; while we speak of his work, we seldom praise his work. It is said of the vertuous Woman, (Prov. 31. 31.) *Her own works praise her in the Gates;* that is, they like so many Elegant Oratours tell all that pass by, how praise-worthy she is. *The works of God will praise him, whether men do or no.* *All thy works shall praise thee,* (saith David, Psal. 145. 10.) What then should they do for whom they are wrought? The latter part of the verse shews what they will do who know what God hath wrought for them; *Thy Saints (saith he) shall bless thee.* *They who have (as most have) low thoughts, can never give high praises of the works of God.*

Thirdly, In that this counsel and exhortion is given to Job, in that this spur is, as it were, put to his sides, *Remember that thou magnifie,*

Note;

The best men need monitours and remembrancers to quicken them about their duty of magnifying the works of God.

The Lord, though he needeth not, yet will have us to be his remem-

remembrancers, to do our works for us, if we would have our works done; the Lord would have us by prayer to mind him of our own, and of all his peoples condition (*Isa. 62. 6.*) *Ye that are the Lords remembrancers* (so we put in the Margine, and in the Text) *ye that make mention of the Lord, &c.* The Lord will have us to be his remembrancers. And though he is ever mindful of his Covenant, yet he liketh it well to be put in mind of it. But O what need have we of a remembrancer, to put us in mind of the work of God, and to magnifie his work! We need a dayly remembrancer to put us in mind of what we should do, how much more of what God hath done! We need to be minded of that which 'tis a wonder how we can forget, our latter end, or how frail we are; how much more do we need to be minded of those duties which fit us for our latter end, and lead us to those enjoyments which never end!

Fourthly, Observe;

Such is the sinfulness of mans heart, and his sluggishness, that he hardly remembers to magnifie God for those works which he cannot but see.

Elihu urgeth Job, and with him all men, to remember that they magnifie even that work of his which men behold, and which every man may see. How slack are they in or to that great duty of magnifying God, who when they see, or may see, if they will, his mighty works, yet mind not the magnifying of him!

Fifthly, Observe;

Some works of providence are so plain, that every man, that doth not wilfully shut his eyes, may behold them.

He is altogether stupid and blockish, that seeth not what all may see. Hence the Psalmist, having said, *O Lord, how great are thy works*, concludeth such among brutes and fools, (*Psal. 92. 6.*) *The brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand this.* It was the saying of Plato an Heathen; *That man is worthy his eyes should be pulled out of his head, who doth not lift them up on high, that he may admire the wisdom of the Creatour in the wonderful fabrick of the world*; I may adde, and in the works of providence: Are they not such, that as the Prophet speaks, *He that runs may read them*?

Sixthly,

Sixthly, Consider why doth *Elihu* thus charge it upon *Job*? surely to humble him for his sin, in that he did not magnifie God for his works.

Hence Note;

It is a great aggravation of our neglect of praising God for his works, or of our not magnifying the works of God, seeing his works are obvious to every man, even to the weaker and ruder sort of men.

If the very blind may see them, how sinfully blind are they, who see them not! The works of God should be sought out, (*Psal.* 111. 2, 4.) If they lie in corners, yet they are to be sought out, and they are sought out of them that have pleasure therein. If God should hide his work under ground, if God should put his Candle under a bushel (as Christ saith men do not, *Mat.* 5.) yet 'tis our duty to seek it out, and set it upon a Candlestick, that all may behold it, and praise him for it. Now if the most hidden works of God must be sought out, that they may be magnified, surely then, when the works of God stand forth and offer themselves to our view, and we cannot tell which way to draw our eyes from them, how great a sin is it, not to behold them, not to give him the glory of them.

Seventhly, Observe;

To magnifie the works of God is mans duty, yea it is a most necessary and indispensable duty.

This is the poynt chiefly intended by *Elihu* in his present discourse with *Job*; This containeth the sum and substance of the whole Text. To magnifie the work of God is so necessary, so indispensable a duty, that A remember is put upon it, lest at any time it should slip from us. The Lord knowing how great, how weighty, how comfortable, how profitable a duty it is to keep the *Rest day*, prefixeth this word, *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy*, (*Exod.* 20. 8.) I might give instance from several other Scriptures, importing those duties which have a *memento* put upon them to be of great necessity, and that the Lord will not bear with us if we lay them by, or neglect the constant performance of them. To forget any duty is very sinfull, how much more those which we are specially warned to remember that we do them!

David

David was not satisfied in doing the duty of the text alone, but must associate others with him in it. (*Pf. 34. 3.*) *O let us magnifie the Lord together*; that's a blessed consort, the consort of the blessed for ever. The whole work and reward too, of Saints in heaven is, and eternally will be, to magnify God; and they have the beginnings of that work and reward, who are sincerely magnifying his work here on earth. *God hath magnified his word* (in all things) *above his name* (*Psal. 138. 2.*) and the reason is, because his workes answer or are the fulfilling of his word to the praise of his glorious name. Now if God hath magnified his word by his workes then we must magnifie his workes, or him in his workes. For wherein doth God magnifie his word but in his workes? He hath magnified his work by bringing his word forth in his workes: Surely then if God hath magnified his word by bringing it forth in his workes, then 'tis our duty to magnifie the workes of God, which are the product, effect and answer of his word.

But some may say, how is that done? I would give answer to this question in five things.

First, Then we magnifie the work of God, when we magnifie God for his work: we cannot magnifie the mercy of God, but by magnifying the God of our mercys; We cannot magnifie his work while we neglect himself. we magnifie God in his work, first, when we ascribe the whole efficiency of what we see done in the world, to him, and say, *This is the finger of God*, Or when we say, according to this or that time, *What hath God wrought?* (*Numb. 23. 23.*) To magnifie the work of God is to give the whole of it to God. 'Tis the hand of God upon a work that sets the price upon any work, and makes it worthy to be magnified. As in some Pictures, this sets a price upon them, to say they are such a mans work, the work of such a famous Artist, the work of *Apelles*, or of *Michael Angelo*. So if we would magnifie any providential work, we must say, it is the work of the great God, it is he that hath done it; the eye of our mind must look directly at God in ruling and governing of the world. While we pore much upon, or stay our thoughts about second causes, we cannot exalt the work of God; though we call it Gods work, yet if our hearts hang about second causes, the work cannot be exalted as his. 'Tis a depreciation of the work of God to put any thing of man upon it. To honour the work of God is to give him the whole

whole effect of the work. As we then magnifie God when we look to him alone, with a single eye, as the end of all our works (There is nothing doth magnifie God in what we do, but our looking to God as the end of all we do; Let our work be what it will, never so glittering, never so gay and glorious in the eye of the world, yet if it be not consigned over to God, it is a base and pittiful work; if any man dedicates his work to himself he dishonours his work: Now (I say) as it magnifieth our work when we make God the end of our work) so that which magnifieth Gods work, is, when we look upon him, not only as having an hand in it; but as being both the beginner and ender of it. If we take or give this to the creature, that is, sit down in this or that Instrument, as the means by which we have attained our end, or as the end of what we have attained, we spoil the work as to God, or despoil God of his work. **Remember, this, and this only, magnifieth our work, when we with a single eye look to God as the author and as the end of it. Every work we see done is magnified, and God in it, when we look to God as the Alpha and Omega, as the Author and Ender of it.** Nor is this true only in thoe works of God which he doth more immediately, but where men act most, and are very instrumental. Let us therefore ascribe every work to God, and that first, in afflicting us; such an eye Joseph had (*Gen. 45. 8.*) *It was not you that sent me hither, but God; that is, not so much you, as God (saith Joseph to his brethren) I do not say it was you (though you were unkind brethren) it was not you that sent me hither, but God: I look at him more than at you in that great affliction, which was brought upon me by your envy and unbrotherly unkindness towards me. Such an eye David had when he was under a very grievous, black, dark providence, when his son rose up against him, and when his subject Shimei cursed him, even then he magnified that work of God, by ascribing it wholly unto him (2 Sam. 16. 10.) The Lord hath said unto him, curse David. He magnified God in that great affliction by looking at the hand of God alone in it, and passing by Shimei's, both undutifulness and extreme malignity. He said as much, while he tells us he said nothing, in a like or as bad a case (Psal. 39. 9.) I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it. Hence that reproof in the Prophet (Isa. 5. 12.) They regard not the work of the Lord, nor consider the operation of his hand.*

Second-

Secondly, Let us aſcribe every work to God in exalting us; ſuch an eye had the Church to God (*Pſal. 44. 1, 2, 3.*) *Our fathers have told us, what work thou didſt in their dayes;* Thou didſt drive out the heathen by thy hand, and plantedſt them, they got not the land in poſſeſſion by their own ſword, &c. but by thy right hand, and thine arm, &c. Here is no mention at all of *Joſhua's* achievements and famous victories in ſubduing the *Canaanites*, &c. All is given to God, and he alone exalted for that exalting work. That's the firſt answer: Then we magnifie the work of God, when we acknowledge him alone both in afflicting and exalting us.

Secondly, Then we magnifie the work of God, when we beat out, as it were, and ſift all the circumſtances of his work (as we ſay) to the bran, that ſo we may find out every perfection, every glory of it: when we do not only behold and ſee the work, but when (as direction is given, *Pſ. 48.*) *We walk about Zion, tell her towers, and conſider her palaces*, that is, when we do not look upon things only in the bulk, but make an exact ſcrutiny, or take a full view of every part. We cannot magnifie the work of God by a bare beholding of it, but by prying into every circumſtance of it, or by conſidering what excellencies and rarities are in it. As we magnifie our ſinful work (in one ſence we ſhould magnifie our ſins, that is, aggravate them, not magnifie them to applaud them, or glory in them, but to make our ſelves aſhamed of them, as (I ſay) we magnifie our ſinful works, or what we have done ſinfully, when we conſider all the circumſtances of our ſins, as committed againſt light and love, againſt mercy and goodneſs, againſt the patience and forbearance of God, againſt our own profeſſions and promiſes, againſt our experiences and priviledges, all which ſhould oblige us to holineſs, and engage us to a gracious circumſpection in all our wayes, and walkings, leſt at any time we ſhould ſin againſt God and grieve his Spirit: So we magnifie the works of God when we eye all the circumſtances of them, and conſider them as done for us when we could do nothing for our ſelves, as done for us when we muſt have periſhed and been undone, unleſs God had appeared for us; as done for us when we deſerved not the leaſt good to be done for us; as done for us when none would do any thing for us, none caring for our ſoules; as done for us when none could do any thing for us. Theſe and ſuch like

circumstantial considerations; exceedingly magnifie the work of God. A bare beholt, a transient look may discover no great matter, but if we seriously weigh every particular, we shall then see cause enough to magnifie the work of God. *Elijah* (1 Kings 18. 43.) commanded his servant to go look towards the sea, and when he went first, he saw nothing, but being commanded to go seven times, he at the seventh saw a little cloud rising out of the sea, as big as a mans hand; but at the last, heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. If we would look again and again, if we would look seven times upon the work of God, that which at first seemed nothing, or afterwards no bigger than a mans hand, or no bigger than a mans hand could effect and bring about, will at last be magnified to such a vastness, that all must confess, the hand of God hath done it.

Thirdly, We then magnifie the works of God, when we freely submit to God in them, as just and righteous, when we accept and take them kindly at his hand, not only when they are outward kindneses, but crosses. All the great words and rhetorick we can bestow upon the works of God will not magnifie them, unless we freely submit to them as just and righteous. They that would magnifie the works of God, must say, *Judgment and righteousness are the habitation of his throne*, while they can see nothing but *Clouds and darkness round about him* (Psal. 97. 2.) I (saith the Psalmist) am in the dark about all that God is doing at this day, yet of this I am as confident as confidence it self, *Judgment and Righteousness are the habitation of his throne*; I know God doth nothing amiss, no not in the least. Thus *John* in the *Revelation* (Chap. 15. 3.) saw them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, and they (saith he) sing the Song of *Moses*, &c. saying, *great and marvelous are thy works, just and true are thy wayes*. The works of God in Judgment upon *Babylon*, are full of justice, and we magnifie them by proclaiming and crying them up as just; yea, the work of God in judgment upon *Zion*, is exceedingly magnified, when *Zion* submits to it, and embraceth it as just and righteous. It was the great sin of the house of *Israel*, when they said (*Ezek. 18. 25.*) *The wayes of God are not equal*. As if they had said, are these the Lords equal dealings, that we his People should be given up to the hand of the enemy, and suffer such things as these? yea,

yea, the house of *Israel* must say, all the works of God, not only his exalting work, but his humbling works, are equal, just and righteous, for we have sinned. This is to magnifie the work of God.

Fourthly, To magnifie the work of God, is to look upon his work what-ever it is, not only as having justice in it towards all men, but as good and being full of goodness to his People. Possibly it may be very hard work, yet we must bring our hearts to say it is good work, good to and for the *Israel* of God. Thus the holy man of old magnified the work of God (*Psal.* 73. 1.) *Truly God is good to Israel.* This he spake while he was bemoaning himself under very afflicting providences. We magnifie the afflicting works of God, when we submit to them as just, much more when we embrace them as good. And it was very much the design of *Elihu* to bring *Job* off from disputing about the evils with which God had so long exercised him, to a ready yeeldance that they were good for him, and that in all the Lord intended nothing but his good.

Fifthly, To magnifie the work of God, is to answer the end of it. Every work is magnified when it receiveth its end; if a work be done, yet if it have not its effect, if it bring not that about to which it was designed, the worker receives no honour from it, nor is the work honoured. To work in vain, is a debasing, a lessening of any work, nor a magnifying of it. The Apostle was afraid to bestow his labour in preaching the Gospel in vain. When people still continue in their blindness and unbelief, &c. this layeth the preaching of the Gospel low; but when souls are convinced and converted, and come flocking in, then the Gospel is magnified, and the word of the Lord glorified, as the Apostle prayed it might (*2 Thes.* 3. 1.) Now as the word of God is magnified when it attains its end, so the work of God is magnified when we give him, or come up to those ends for which he wrought it. But if we let God lose the end of his work, we do what we can to debate his work, as if he had done it in vain. We say, he works like a fool that hath not proposed an end to every work he doth; and he appears not very wise, at least not very powerful, who attaineth not the end or ends for which he began his work. The most wise God hath his end and aim in all his works in this world; and this is the honour we do his work, when we labour, first, to know, and secondly, to give him his end in every work.

But if any ask, What are the ends of God in his work?

I answer, They are very various.

First, The chief end of all that God doth, is the advancement of his own Name and Glory. As he made all things for himself in Creation, so he doth all things for himself in Providence. That which is the sin of man is the holiness of God, to seek himself. It is most proper for God, who is the chief good, and whose glory is the ultimate end of all things, to set up himself in all things (Prov. 16. 4.) *The Lord hath made all things for himself, saith Solomon.* And the Apostle saith as much (Rom. 11. 36.) *Of him and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever, Amen.* All things are of him, therefore all things should return unto him. If we would magnifie any work of God, we must be sure to give him this end, the glory of it. Let it not satisfie us, that we are advanced, or get up by the works of God, unless we our selves advance his glory by them. Many advance themselves, and are lifted up with pride, when God works for them or by them, not at all minding that which they should chiefly mind, the glorifying of God in & by what he hath wrought, either for themselves or others.

Secondly, God hath this in design, by all his works, to make us better. If it be a work of Judgment, it is to make us better, and then we exalt his works of Judgement, when we are bettered by them, when we are more humbled and weaned from the world by them. And as 'tis the design of God to make us better by his works of Judgement, so by all his works of mercy. The Apostle beseecheth us by the mercies of God, to present our bodies (that is, our whole selves) a living sacrifice, in all holy service to himself (Rom. 12. 1.) What will it advantage us to be bettered in our outward enjoyments, by what God works or doth for us, unless we learn to be better, and do his work better? that is, unless our hearts be more holy, and we more fruitful in every good word and work. Some will magnifie the work of God by keeping a day of thanksgiving, because they are richer or greater by what God hath wrought for them, who yet are not a whit more holy or spiritual by it. We to those who magnifie the work of God because they think it shall go better with them, when themselves are not better. Enquire therefore what lust hath the work of God moved you to mortifie, what grace hath the work of God put you upon the exercise of: They only indeed magnifie the work of God.

God who have such workings towards God. It were better not receive a mercy, than not to be bettered by a mercy. It is not our crying up the works of God in our words, but in our works, which is the magnifying of them. It is more safe for us to say nothing of what God hath wrought for us, than to publish it, or make our boast of it, when we our selves do nothing worthy of it, in a way of condecency, and proportion to it. 'Tis the design of God in giving promises to make us *cleanse our selves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God* (2 Cor. 7. 1.) Much more having given us any great performances of his promises, doth he expect that we should be clean and holy. O then what a pittifull course do they take, who pretending to magnifie the works of God, do such things as are a defilement both to flesh and spirit !

A third design of God in working for us, is to make us trust him more, or, to be more in believing. 'Tis shewed (*Psal. 78. 4.*) what great things God did for the Jewish nation, and for their fathers ; But what did God ayme at in all ? we have the answer (*v. 8.*) *That they might set their hope in him, and not forget his workes.* The aim which God had in those great works, was that their hope might be set upon him, that they might trust in him more then ever they had done. The Lord, by the great works he doth, would gain upon our faith, or cause us to trust him for the future. How dishonorably do they carry it towards God, who believe not his word, much more they who believe not his workes, that is, who believe him not, notwithstanding his workes, as 'tis said of *Israel* (*Pf. 78. 32.*) *For all this they finned still ; and believed not his wondrous workes.* The Psalmist doth not mean, that they did not believe such works had been done ; but the meaning is, they did not trust God who had done those works. These and many more duties the Lord teacheth us by his word, and he teacheth them also by his workes, as it is said (*v. 22.*) *who teacheth like him ?* The Lord teacheth us many excellent lessons by his workes, if we had hearts to learn them. Lay these things together in practise, and they will be the best, yea, they are the only way of magnifying the works of God done for us. And, if the works of God are to be magnified all these wayes, then they fall short of this duty,

First, Who only make a report of the works of God, who tell the

the story of what he hath done, and so have done. As we ought to adorne the doctrine of God (*Tir. 2.*) so likewise the doings of God, or what God hath done by our doings. Meer narratives about the work of God, is far below magnifying his work.

Secondly, They fail much more who extenuate and diminish the works of God, who obscure or eclipse his workes. As in our confessions of repentance, it is a sign of a bad heart barely to report our sins before God, without aggravating them in their sinfulness; but in confession to extenuate our sin sheweth a very rotten and naughty heart: so in our confessions of praise, meely to report what God hath done for us, without putting in accent or a due emphasis upon his mercies, shews much coldness of spirit in the duty; but to clip and lessen the workes of God, to hide and darken them, to abate and detract from them, shewes a base and a wicked spirit.

Thirdly, How do they fail in magnifying the workes of God, who do not only conceal how good they are, but bring up an ill report upon them, as those searchers did upon the land of *Canaan*. Those works and dispensations of God, which (like that land) flow with milk and honey, may be looked upon and censured by some, as good for nothing but to eat up and consume those that are under them.

Fourthly, They who are impatient under any work of God, who murmur and repine at it, are far from magnifying the work of God.

Fifthly, They are far from magnifying the work of God, who think themselves so wise that they could mend the work of God; had they the pencil in their hand they would make fairer work of it: what hudling is here? think some; what confusion is here? say others; what sad work is here? saith a third. If we had the ordering of things what an orderly world would we make, if we had the ordering of things (as God hath) we would quickly cure and remedy all these disorders. Though such formal speeches be not uttered, yet such things are spoken in parables, the actions of some tell us such are their thoughts, as if they could mend the work of God, and govern the world with greater moderation than tis; though indeed we need not scruple to call the wisest man in the world a very doraad, if he thinks so, or that any thing can be done more equally than God hath done it. Let all
flesh

flesh adore, let none presume to question the work of God; let God alone with his work; as he will have no controler, so he needs no counsellor. Remember, tis mans duty to *magnifie his work*, not to mend it, to shew how good it is, not to attempt the making of it better. And indeed as it is the highest poynt of presumption, so of ignorance, to meddle with the mending of it. *The Lord is a Rock* (saith *Moses*, *Deut. 32. 4.*) *and his work is perfect.* Who but a fool, or who but by the over-working of his own folly would venture to mend that which is already, not only perfected, but perfect, were it only the work of a man, much more when it is the work of God, the only wise God?

And that we may be provoked humbly to magnify, and for ever deterred from that proud attempt of finding fault with, or mending the work of God, consider these three things;

First, Take the argument in the text, the plainness of the work of God, it is such as may be seen afar off, none can pretend ignorance of it, or if they do, that's a vain covert, or excuse; every man may see it, man may behold it afar off, as most worthy to be magnified.

Secondly, If we do not magnifie the work of God, God will lessen his own works of mercy and favour toward us.

Thirdly, He will do no more for us if we magnifie not what he hath done. It is said (*Math. 13. 58.*) *Christ did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.* God will do no more mighty works for them, who refuse or neglect to pay him a tribute of praise and glory for what he hath done.

J O B , Chap. 36. Vers. 26.

26. Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out.

Elisha having called upon Job to magnifie the work of God in general, proceeds to draw him to the magnifying of the special works of God in naturals: Yet before he leads him to the consideration of the greatness of those works, he invites him to consider God himself who is the Author and Disposer of them, and he invites him to consider God in three things, all which we find laid down in this 26th verse.

First, In his Greatness; *Behold God is great.*

Secondly, In his Incomprehensibleness; *He is great, and we know him not.*

Thirdly, In his Eternity; *Neither can the number of his years be searched out.*

Surely he is most worthy our consideration who is great, and so great that he cannot be comprehended, and who is eternally great, whose years are numberless.

Vers. 26. *Behold God is great.*

The word *Behold*, is here a note both of Attention and admiration; O mind, O admire the greatness of God. *God is great.* The word rendred *great*, properly signifies an encreasing growing greatness; *God is without all encrease or growth, being forever the same, yet he may be said to encrease, to be magnified and multiplied (as I may say) according to the apprehensions which we have of him. This word bears the signification both of much and many. God is but one and the one-most one, yet (in this sence) many. So the Septuagint renders it here, he hath, or is many, that is, he hath all perfections in him; the lines of all excellency and virtue, of all glory and perfection, center in God alone. Thus God is much, and God is many; the one God is many, he hath many, he hath all eminencies and excellencies bound up, boundlessly in him.*

Again, *God is great*, in himself or in his being. Whatsoever is in God is God, and therefore whatsoever is in God is great. The

POWER

Et multus, &
magnus, multum
robore. Druf.
Septuaginta
legunt multus,
i. e. omnibus
numeris perfe-
ctus, atque om-
nibus perfecti-
onibus cumu-
latus.

power of God is the powerful God, and therefore his power muſt needs be great; the wiſdom of God is the wiſe God, and therefore his wiſdom muſt needs be very great; the mercy of God is the merciful God, and therefore his mercy muſt needs be very great: And thus we may proceed in our meditations quite through all the divine Attributes.

And as God is great in his being, ſo he is great in his working, he doth great things. The Pſalmiſt ſaith, *he is good, and doth good; he is alſo great, and doth great things*; he is the firſt, the chief, and the beſt being, and his doings are ſuch as he is, he doth like himſelf. God is great, and he hath an excellent, an excelling greatneſs. Praise him (ſaith David, *Pſal. 150. 2.*) according to his excellent greatneſs, or as the words may well bear, according to his muchneſs of greatneſs; for when the Scripture ſaith, *God is great*, this poſitive is to be taken as a ſuperlative, *God is great*, that is, he is greateſt, he is greater than all, to great that all perſons and all things are little, yea, nothing before him (*Iſa. 40. 15.*) Behold the nations are (to him but) as the drop of the bucket, and are counted but as the ſmal duſt of the ballance: behold, he taketh up the Iſles as a very little thing, they are as nothing, and they are counted to him as leſs than nothing and vanity. How great is God in compariſon of whom the greateſt things are little things, yea, the greateſt things are nothing.

Behold, *God is great*. From this excellent Attribute, the greatneſs of God, I have made ſeveral Inferences already, at the 12th verſe of the 33d chapter; yet I ſhall infer ſome things further here, both for our direction and conſolation.

Fiſt, *If God be great and greateſt, then fear him greatly.* Great is the Lord (ſaid David, in his thankſgiving-ſong, *1 Chron. 16. 25.*) he alſo is to be feared above all gods; that is, above all the great powers on earth, and above all the imaginary powers of heaven. Idols, who are the fancied powers of heaven, are ſometimes called gods in Scripture; ſo likewiſe are Princes or Magiſtrates, who are real powers on earth. Now, ſaith David (who was one of thoſe gods, and a great one) *fear him above all gods*: Why? Becauſe he is above all gods, he is higher than the higheſt and he is greater than the greateſt; therefore fear him above all gods, yea, therefore fear, or worſhip him all ye gods (*Pſal. 97. 7.*) Many ſay with their mouthes, God is great, yea, infinitely greater

than man, yet they fear men, especially great men, more than God.

Secondly, If God be great, *then love him greatly.* Shall this great God have but little love from us? The Law of love, with respect to God, is exprest two wayes in Scripture; first, as to the truth of it; and secondly, as to the measure or degree of it. The love which is given to God must be a true love, a sincere love, yet not only so, but the love which is given to God must be the greatest love; *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might, and with all thy strength; with all thy heart sincerely, with all thy might and strength greatly.*

Thirdly, If God be great, *then serve him greatly, or do him great service.* Take heed of offering the lean and the lame, the halt and the blind to this great King. A great King must not be put off with little services with small pittances of duty.

Fourthly, If God be great, *then believe him greatly; let us have great faith in the great God.* Jesus Christ rebukes his disciples (*Mat. 8. 26.*) *O ye of little faith; have you God to pitch your faith upon, who is great? have you his power, and his mercy, and his truth, and his faithfulness, all which are great, to rest upon? and have you but a little faith?* That woman (*Mat. 15. 28.*) gave glory to God in believing, when she believed greatly; and therefore Christ cryeth up and magnifyeth the greatness of her faith, *O woman, great is thy faith.*

Fifthly, *The great God is greatly to be praised; he doth great things for us, therefore we must return great thanks to him.* That also we have expressly (*1 Chron. 16. 25.*) *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised.* The great God must have great praises, for he doth great things. As every sin we commit against God hath a greatness in it upon this consideration, because he is a great God against whom we sin (Take heed of the least sin, for that is great, being committed against the great God) so whatsoever duty (this of praise especially) we perform to God, we should strive to raise it up to the greatest, to the highest, because the great God, the high God is concerned in it, or it is consigned to the great, to the high God.

Sixthly, If God be great, *we ought to give him great submission, or to submit greatly to him.* Great submission to God is the substance

stance of all duty to God. We owe the full submission of our wills to the Will of God in a twofold respect. First, to whatsoever he willeth us to do, or to his commanding will. Secondly, to whatsoever he will do with us, or to his disposing Will. In these, and in all things, let us strive to greater all the adings of our souls towards God, because he is great.

Secondly, If God be great, then we may infer for consolation.

First, Be not discouraged in prayer when you have great things to ask, when your wants are great, and your necessities urgent, when you must have great supplies, when small matters will not serve your turn. (In many cases, it is not a little help, it is not a small matter which will do the thing which we sue unto God for) now here is a mighty ground of comfort for us, if we want great things, we have a great God to go unto ; and how great soever our wants are, they are all but small to the greatness of that God unto whom we go (Ephes. 3. 20.) *He is able to do exceeding abundantly above what we ask or think ;* and not only above what we actually ask and think, but indeed, beyond what possibly we can ask or think, above what we are able to ask or think. Therefore let us never be discouraged in prayer, because of the greatness of the things that we have to ask of God.

Secondly, Be not discouraged, though as your wants, so your dangers and your troubles are great. How great soever the danger is you would be delivered from, God is greater, to whom you come for deliverance: And therefore when a great Mountain stood in the way of the deliverance of the people of God (Zech. 4. 7.) the Prophet speaks in this language, *Who art thou ? O great Mountain, thou shalt become a Plain before Zerubbabel ;* that is, before the power of that God in whom Zerubbabel trusts and whose work Zerubbabel carries on. Hence that holy confidence (Psal. 66. 3.) *Through the greatness of thy power, thine enemies shall submit themselves to thee, or, they shall yeild feigned obedience, as we put in the margin, which some render thus, through the greatness of thy power, thine enemies shall be found liars. All the readings magnifie the greatness of God.* Through the greatness of thy power thine enemies, the enemies of thy people, shall submit, they shall be found liars, they shall yeild feigned obedience, they shall not be able with all their greatness to stand it out against the great

God. Therefore be not discouraged at any time at the greatness of danger. *Though you walk through the very valley of the shadow of death* (that's to be in the greatest danger) yet as *David* did not, so do not you fear, no not that great danger, while the great God is with you.

Thirdly, *Be not discouraged though your sins are great when you come to ask the pardon of them.* As the greatness of sin puts a very great damp upon the spirit of man in asking pardon, so the greatness of God should take off that damp. *My thoughts are not your thoughts* (saith the Lord *Isa.* 55. 7, 8, 9.) in this matter. There is nothing wherein God doth more exceed man than in pardoning sin (*Mic.* 7. 18.) If sin be great, the mercy of God is great too, infinitely greater than the sin of man; if sin be great, remember we have a great high Priest (*Heb.* 4. 14.) not only a Priest, but a high Priest, and a great high Priest; therefore fear not to ask the pardon, even of the greatest sin, in his name and for his sake. And this is true if we respect either national or personal sins; it may encourage us in asking pardon for nations, how great soever their sins are. *Moses*, when the People had greatly sinned against God, had recourse to this (*Numb.* 14. 18, 19.) *The Lord is of great mercy; pardon I beseech thee the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of thy mercy, as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt even until now.* Do thus also with respect to personal sins. *David* made the greatness of his personal sin an argument to go to God for mercy (*Psal.* 25. 11.) *Pardon my sin, O Lord, for it is great.* He was so far from being disheartened by the greatness of his sin, to ask the pardon of it, that (according to our reading) he had great hope of pardon, as well as saw he had great need of pardon; and all because he knew God was great in mercy. Or, if we read that text thus, *Pardon my sin, O Lord, though it be great*, the sense is much the same; for as the former makes the greatness of his sin a reason provoking him to hasten unto God for pardon (as great diseases hasten us in seeking remedies) so the latter shews that the greatness of sin is no stop to the mercy and free grace of God in Christ, for the pardon of it. Christ in that Parable (*Mat.* 18. 24.) gives instance of the greatest debt; he tells us of one that owed his Lord *ten thousand talents*, a vast sum, a very vast sum; a talent being, according to the lowest computation, three hundred pounds of money;

ten

ten thousand times three hundred pounds is a huge sum; so that here was a great debt; now (saith the text) *When the debtor had nothing to pay, he came to his Lord, or Creditor, and he forgave him all.* He did not say, *wouldest thou have me, or can I, forgive such a debt as this?* What, ten thousand talents? He forgave it as if it had been a debt of two mires. Thus, and many other ways we may improve this first Attribute of God, mentioned in the text, *his greatness*, both as to our direction in duty, and consolation in every extremity. *Behold God is great,*

And we know him not.

That's the second thing. The words are plain, but the sense is difficult; for it may be objected, Do not we know God? *Elisha* said but just now, in the very verse before the text, *Magnific his works which men behold, every man may see it, man may behold it afar off?* Surely if the works of God may be known and seen by every one, God himself may be known, for he is known in his works, as the Apostle argues (*Rom. 1. 20.*) The things which he hath made make him known: how is this then said, *That God is great and we know him not?* Doth not the Prophet in denouncing that dreadful curse (*Jer. 10. 25.*) *Poure out thy wrath upon the heathen that know thee not*, thereby intimate, that all the people of God know him? Doth not Christ tell us (*John 17. 3.*) *This is eternal life, to know thee the only true God.* They who have eternal life, must have the knowledge of the true God. But all true believers have eternal life already in hope, and shall have it shortly in hand, therefore they know God. The Promise of the New Covenant is (*Heb. 11.*) *They shall all know me from the least to the greatest;* that is, all my Covenant-people shall know me. How is it then said, *God is great, and we know him not?* When *Paul* was at *Athens*, he found an Altar with that Inscription, *To the unknown God* (*Act. 17. 23.*) They worshipped a God whom they knew not, but certainly we must know whom we worship. *Ye worship ye know not what*, was Christ's reproof of the *Samaritans* (*John 4. 22.*) *We know what we worship;* that is, whom we worship.

For answer to this, when the text saith, *God is great and we know him not;* we may say, First, That even heathens, the untaught, untutored, and uncatechized heathens do, or, may know God;

God, that is, they may know him in some degree or other, they may, yea, they do know him (as the Apostle saith, *Rom. 1. 20.*) so far as to leave them *without excuse*; they have no plea, nor can they make any apologie for themselves. Secondly, 'Tis certain, all believers, I mean all true believers, know God savingly, or so far as is sufficient for their salvation. Every believer knows God. There is no faith in God without the knowledge of God. Thirdly, Which shall be the point of Observation from this part, as well as an answer to the question;

None know God fully, perfectly, comprehensively.

That's *Elihu's* meaning when he saith, *God is great, and we know him not*; that is, we know not how great he is, or we know not the utmost of his greatness. God only knoweth himself fully and comprehensively. There is no proportion between the greatness of God and the understanding of a man. The greatness of God is infinite, the understanding of a man is but finite and limited; the deepest understanding among men, yea, the understanding of Angels is but shallow, compared with God. Thus we are to understand this text, *God is great, and we know him not.* There is a greatness in every thing of God, transcending the possibility of any created understanding. This some give for the reason, why the Seraphims spoken of (*Isa. 6.*) are said with *two of their wings to cover their faces*, they were not able to bear the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. For, though Christ, in that admonition which he gave, to take heed of offending and despising the little ones, gives this reason for it. (*Mat. 18. 10.*) *For in heaven there Angels do alwayes behold the face of my Father which is in heaven*; though (I say) it be a truth, that the holy Angels, and blessed Saints above, do alwayes behold the face of God, yet neither Saints nor Angels, nor the Saints in glory, nor the glorious Angels, can fully comprehend the greatness and majesty of God; and therefore the Prophet (as was said) represented the Angels covering their faces with their wings. We have heard of King *Hiero* putting the question to *Simonides*, a Philosopher, *What God was*, who desired (not being able to give a sudden answer) that the King would respit him till next day; when next day came he desired a second, and when that came he desired a third; and still the more he searched, the

the farther he was from finding his answer. This is true, not only of Philosophers, who see but by the dark light of Nature, but of those who are enlightened divinely, or from above, they who receive much light from God, cannot comprehend the light of God; the more they search into it, the more they see themselves short of it. The most we know of God is not so much as the least part of that which we know not of him; and when we know as much of God as is knowable by man, yet it may be said, as in the text, *God is great, and we know him not.*

Hence take three brief Corolaries or Deductions.

First, If God be great and *we know him not*, that is, we are not able to comprehend him; then we must rest satisfied with what God hath manifested of himself and of his will. God hath manifested himself these four wayes. First, In his Word. Secondly, In his works of Creation and Providence. Thirdly, In his Son. Fourthly, By his Spirit. These wayes God is pleased to manifest himself, or make himself known unto his People; now what knowledge of God can be gathered up in these wayes, what can be learned of him out of his word, out of his works, by considering him in his Son, and by waiting for the help of his blessed Spirit, we must labour to take in; but take heed of a bold pressing into the secrets of God, or of a curious prying into the nature of God, which indeed will but dazle our eyes, and the more we think or look into it, the blinder we shall be.

Secondly, If God be so great that we know him not, *Then we ought not presumptuously to enquire into a reason of the works and wayes of God*; for that which is true of God himself, is true of his works and of his wayes, we cannot know them in the fence opened: Therefore the Apostle speaking about that wonderful dispensation of God, the laying aside of the *Jewes* and calling of the *Gentiles* (Rom. 11. 33.) cryeth out, *O the depth of the knowledge and wisdom of God! how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his wayes past finding out!* As God himself cannot be fully known, so neither can his wayes nor works.

Thirdly, If God cannot be fully known, neither in himself, nor in his works, *Then take heed of murmuring or complaining of the wayes, works, and dealings of God.* Will you find fault with that which you neither do, nor can fully know? how little is it of any of the works of God, that we know! how little a way do we
see

see into them ! let us not find fault with that thing, the perfections whereof we cannot find out ; say not, why is it thus ? why doeth God let things go thus ? why are his providences ordered thus ? there are many such queryings in the hearts of men, and some such are exprest by the tongues of men. But remember the Lord cannot be known in his works, therefore let us not complain of his works, but, sitting down in silence, submit to them ; let us (as *David*) *Be dumb because God hath done it,* (Psal. 39. 9.) *David* was silent, not only with respect to the sovereignty of God, who, he knew, had power and liberty to do whatsoever he pleased, but with respect to his incomprehensibility, because he knew he was not able to know or understand the bottome-reason of that which God had done. This some conceive, the special intendment of *Elihu* in this Text, as reproving *Job* for his many complaints, and murmurings, and disputings about the dealings of God with him in the extremity of his sufferings : Therefore, said he, *Consider God is great, and we know him not.*

Yet let none be discouraged in seeking after the knowledge of God, because 'tis told us we cannot know God ; yea let no man think to excuse himself in his neglect of pursuing the knowledge of God, because this Text saith we cannot know him. Some possibly will say, If God be so great, that we cannot know him, then why should we labour after the knowledge of God ? or we hope this will excuse us, if we do not know him, seeing we cannot. Take heed of such reasonings ; for though God cannot be known to the utmost of what himself is, yet God may be known so far as is needfull for us, and that is very far. We may know God so far as concerns our duty to him, and our happiness by him ; we may know God so far as to honour him, and to enjoy him : and we must labour to know him perfectly, though we cannot. The Apostle speaking of the love of God (*Eph. 3. 17.*) would have us *labour to comprehend with all Saints, the height, the breadth, the depth, the length, and to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge.* That the love of Christ passeth knowledge, that it exceeds our understanding, should not discourage us from labouring to know it ; nor will it excuse any that sit down idly, and do not study the knowledge of God, though he passeth knowledge ; we must labour to know the greatness of Gods love, and the greatness of Gods wisdom, and the greatness of Gods power, though the great-

greatness of God in all these is greater than our narrow hearts can comprehend. Behold, God is great, and we know him not,

Neither can the number of his years be searched out.

The Text is, *Number of his years, no search*; that is, as we well translate it, *the number of his years is such as cannot be searched*, we say, *searched out*; it is but one word in the Hebrew, properly signifying, *to search a thing to the bottome, that we may find out the utmost of it*. The number of Gods years cannot thus be searched out, we cannot find them to the bottome. Elihu speaks of God after the manner of men; years properly belong to man, and the things here below of this world: the life of man, and the continuance of the creature, are measured by houres, and dayes, and weeks, and months, and years, as these are measured by the motion of the Heavens. But God is far above any such rule or measure of life, or of his being, all these measures are improper unto God; there's no measuring him by houres, dayes, weeks, months or years, or ages. The word which we translate *years*, signifieth *changes*. Years are changed or returned; there is a returne of the same time every year, Spring and Summer, and Autumn and Winter; thus the year changeth, and turnes about continually. God is infinitely above all these changes and turnings of time (Psal. 102. 25, 26, 27.) *The heavens wax old, and as a vesture thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed, but thou art the same, and thy years fayle not*. The years of God are not like the years of the world, which wear it out, and change it as a vesture, is changed by time; the Lord is for ever the same. Thus one of the Ancients glosseth those words of the Psalme, *Thy years fayle not*: *Thy years* (saith he) *neither go nor come*; thy years stand all together, for because they stand, they that go are not excluded by them that come; thy years are one day, and thy day is not day by day, but to day; thy to day doth not give place to to-morrow, nor doth it succeed to yesterday; thy to day is eternity, therefore thou hast begot thy co-eternal, to whom thou saidest, to day have I begotten thee. So then this expression, *Neither can the number of his years be searched out*, is, according to our apprehension and understanding, a description not only of very old age, but of eternity. We would think that man very old, the houres, yea the minures of whose life could not be searched out by a good Arithmetician, v. 28.

Numeros annorum ejus, et non est investigatio.

Annotat apud Hebræos (עליו) ex sua proprietate et Eternitate nomen habet a mutatione, quasi dicatur mutatorius. Ab hac radice vestes dicuntur עֲשָׂרָה, nam mutantur vestes cum innovantur; et mutari idem quod vestiri (1 Reg. 14. 1.)

Augustinus in Psal. 102.

much more easily may we tell how many years the oldest man hath lived: What then shall we think of him the number of whose years cannot be searched out? this can speak nothing less than everlastingness. And this eternity or everlastingness of God, though it be impartible, yet it hath, I may say, a double respect: First, to what went before; Secondly, to what is to come. The eternity of God is such as cannot be searched out, either as to what is past, or to what is to come; indeed unto God there is nothing past or to come; for eternity, properly taken, is an everlasting Now, it is not that which passeth or moveth away; and therefore some of the Ancients elegantly describe eternity, to be the perfect enjoyment of blessed life all at once; which because it is all at once together and perfect, cannot be altered nor lessened. In eternity that which is past is present, yea that which is to come is present in an eternal blessed life. 'Tis so with God, and so in proportion with all those who are entred into eternity, whatsoever they have had is alwayes present with them, nor are they in the expectation of any thing to come; they enjoy all in every moment, without the want of any thing. 'Tis much more so with God; though years have succession, yet the years of God have no succession of times or things.

*Eternitas
tempora omnia
sine ulla successione
complectitur.*

*Eternitas est
vitæ beatæ
totæ simul et
perfectæ possessio.* Boetius.

*Eternitas est
unum esse, et
totum simul
esse, et nihil
deesse.* Greg. l. 16. Moral. c. 21.

*Eternum est
immutabile et
totum impar-
tibiliter.* Dionys. cap. 10. de divinis Nominibus.

Further, The eternity of God, which lies under this description, The Number of his years cannot be searched out, is not a particular attribute of God, but that which disuleth it self through all his attributes; he is eternall in all; there is no searching out the Number of the years of any of the perfections of God; his Wisdome is eternal, and his Power is eternal, and his Goodness is eternal, and his Justice is eternal; there is no searching out the Number of the years of God in any of these perfections.

Hence Note;

God is an eternal being;

His years come not under account, or number. God is eternal, not only without end, as created Spirits are, but without beginning, which no creature is, nor can be; He is eternal, not only without end or beginning, but without succession or mutation. Some of the Ancients tell us, *Eternity stands fast, but moves all other things.* The eternal God is the first Mover, himself being immoveable. If so, then

*Stabilisq;
manens dat
cuncta moveri.* Boet. de Consol. Metro. 9.

First,

First, *All things are alwayes present with or before God*: Things past, things to come are present with God, he were not eternal else. In that eternity or eternal estate of glory which believers shall at last arrive unto, even they shall enjoy all at once, because all their enjoyments shall be in God, or God shall be their whole enjoyment.

Secondly, *God is infinitely happy and blessed*. He hath all that ever he had, or that ever he can have, all at once, or already, nothing of his blessedness is either to come to him or gone from him; therefore he must needs be infinitely blessed. Here in this world some men have had a kind of blessedness, they have been rich and great, they have been in power, they have had their fill of pleasure, but now they have it not, all is perished and gone and past away. There are others in expectation of great matters, of great riches, of great honours, of great contentments in this world, but as yet they have them not; we say of many, *Their lands are not come into their hands*, their estate is but yet in reversion and expectation. Thus it is with men; some have had it, and it is gone, and others though they may have it, yet it is not come. But now with the Lord all is present, and therefore how infinitely happy is he! A man would think himself very happy if he could have all the contentments that ever he had scattered through the several dayes and years of his life gathered into one moment; it is thus with God, and thus in proportion it shall be with us, when we come to that blessed state of eternity.

Thirdly, If God be eternall, if there be no searching out of his years, then

Time is in the dispose and ordering of God. He that inhabiteth eternity, is the Lord of time. God is said to *inhabite eternity*, (*Isa. 57. 15.*) that is, he is eternall, and therefore he is the disposer of all times; he that made time will order time: he ordereth time as to persons, and he orders time as to Nations, he orders times, and all the changes of times, he ordereth, not only the duration of time, but the condition of times; all is from him, whose years cannot be searched out. David said (*Psal. 31. 15.*) *My times are in thy hands*, that is, my personal times in all the changes of them, troublesome or comfortable, joyfull or sorrowfull, are ordered at thy will, by thy power and wisdom. And with respect to Nations Daniel said (*Chap 2. 21.*) *He changeth times*

and seasons. The Lord puts a new face of things upon States and Kingdomes; what changes hath not, cannot the Lord make among the sons of men? The reason of all is, he is eternall.

Fourthly, If there be no searching out the number of the years of God, if he be eternall, then

How ought we to reverence and adore God! We have a Command from God to reverence those who have attained many years in this world, which alas are very few, none at all to the years of God; the aged, the gray-headed must be revered, (*Lev. 19. 32.*) And one reason of that Law may be, because the aged have some shadow of Gods eternity upon them; they who have many years have some resemblance of him, the number of whose years cannot be searched out; therefore God will have them revered. Now if the ancient are to be revered, how much more God himself, who is called (*Dan. 7. 9.*) *The ancient of days!*

Fifthly, If God be eternall, then, we may trust him, yea therefore we ought to trust him, (*Psal. 74. 12.*) *Thou art my King of old, commanding deliverances.* O how did Davids confidence arise upon this, that God who was King of old, is King now, and will be King for ever, (*Psal. 10. 16.*) *The Lord is King for ever and ever; the Heathen are perished out of his Land, that is, they shall surely perish.* God will not alwayes bear with evill men in his Land; For if because God was King of all the Lands, he therefore drave the old Heathen out of Canaan, and planted his people there; doubtless, if they who bear the name of his people there, live so like the old Heathen that they may be called Heathen, he will also cause them to perish out of his Land, and all because he is King for ever and ever, and therefore can do it at one time as well as at another, and now as easily as at any time heretofore. Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength, (*Isa. 26. 4.*) David a Great Prince makes it an argument to draw off our trust from men, from the greatest men, from Princes, because they are not for ever, (*Psal. 146. 3, 4.*) *Trust not in Princes, nor in any Children of men;* why not? many reasons may be given why not; but the only reason there given is their frailty, and the consequents of it; *His breath goeth forth, &c.* As if he had said, Suppose Princes are never so good, and just, and gracious in the exercise of their Power, yet trust not in them, for

for they die, *their breath goeth forth, and then all their thoughts perish*: all the reall purposes which they had, as also the promites which they made for your good, die with them, and can do you no good: The number of their years may be searched out, and run out, their years are not for ever. Now the contrary of that which is an argument used by the Spirit of God to draw off our trust from the gods here on Earth, is an argument to draw on and engage our trust strongly to the God of Heaven; *His breath goeth not forth, none, not one of his thoughts shall perish*; therefore trust in him.

Sixthly, If there be no searching out the number of the years of God, then, *Be not troubled if God seem to stay and not to do the work which you expect this or that year*: If God doth it not this year, he hath another year to do it in, there is no searching out the number of his years. We may say of any man if he doth not his work this year, he may be gone before the next: but if God doth not his work this year, he may do it next year, or two or ten years hence; he hath time enough, even all time before him: therefore the Prophet, having said (*Hab. 2. 3.*) *The vision is for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie*, presently adds, *Though it tarry, wait for it*: As if he had said, The Lord who hath all times and seasons in his power, will do his work in the best time and season, he will do what he hath promised, when it is most fit to be done; if he doth it not at the time when we expect, yet let us wait, he is the Master of time. God who is eternal, cannot be scantied of time, *The number of his years cannot be searched out.* 'Tis a known maxime among the wise men of the world, *Take time, and you may do anything.* What cannot God do, who knoweth all times, and can take what time he will!

Seventhly, Which followeth upon the former, *God will carry on his designs through all the world*: He will carry them through, against all, (*Psal. 92. 8, 9.*) *Thou Lord art most high for evermore; Lo, thine enemies shall perish*; thine enemies who would hinder thy work, they shall certainly fall. Christ is called *The first and the last*; He (*saith St John, Rev. 1. 17.*) *laid his right hand upon me, and said, fear not, I am the first and the last*: Why should he not fear? what did Christ offer to cure him of his fear? Christ doth not give him a bare dissuasive, *Fear not*, but a rational

rational ground why he should not fear. Fear will not be blown away with a breath : Our passions are never truly quieted nor attempered but by reason. Upon what ground then would Christ take off *Johns* fear, even upon this in the Text, *I am the first and the last.* As if he had said, *John* why doest thou fear ? knowest thou not who I am, what a Lord and Master thou servest ? Why, *John*, I tell thee, I am *the first and the last* ; and therefore thou mayest be sure, I will do my work, and none shall lett me. *John* had wonderfull things in vision ; shall all these be done thought he ? yea, saith Christ, *Fear not*, I will carry on my designs (all the designs that Christ had in the world were then in vision) Eternity triumphs over all difficulties ; The Eternall will see the last man born, (as we say) he will have the last word, and the last blow. *I am the first and the last.*

Lastly, From this Consideration of God, let us take a prospect of our selves, what poor short-lived short-breathed Creatures we are. There is no searching out the number of the years of God, but we may quickly search out the number of our own years ; our life is but a span long, (*Psal.* 39. 5.) yea our age is nothing before God. Did we consider the eternity of God, what should we judge of our span-long life ? we are said to be of *yesterday*.

Some expresse man thus ; *He is yesterday* ; as if he were not to day, but were already past while he is. The best that can be said of him is this ; he is *but of yesterday*, and possibly he shall not have a to morrow : but the Lord is for ever and ever the same.

And though we are short-lived as to this world, though our years may soon be told over, yet let us remember that God hath called us to the participation of eternity ; though we have not the eternity of God, which is without beginning, yet we shall have an eternity from God without end ; every man is everlasting as to his soul. The godly shall be blessed for ever ; and there is an eternal estate of wo and misery to the wicked, the number of the years of their sorrows and sufferings, who live and die without Christ, cannot be searched out. The number of the years of the joy and blessedness, and rest and happiness, and tranquility of those that believe, of those that are faithfull, of those that are godly, of those that walk with and fear God, I say the number of the years of their joy and happiness cannot be searched out neither. No man can number or tell how long-lasting the felicity of
Saints

Saints shall be. As the number of the years of God cannot at all be searched out, so he hath given man as to his future estate a numberless number of years: And it were well if we who enjoy this life, and are dying every moment, would often consider there is a life coming which will never die, the number of our years also in that sense cannot be searched out.

The thoughts of eternity should swallow up all our time; yet alas, how doth time, or the things which are but temporary, swallow up, in most men, the thoughts of eternity! What-ever we do in time, should be to fit us for eternity; yet alas, most use their time so, as if they did not believe, or at least hoped, there would not be, any such thing as eternity. Did we but spend two or three minutes of time every day in the serious remembrance of our eternal estate, it would be an effectual means, to make us both holy in and contented with what-ever temporal estate we meet with in this world. We should be earnestly searching after God all our days, did we consider what it imports to us, that the number of his years cannot be searched out.

Thus *Elihu* labours to draw *Job* to the consideration of God himself, who is the Author of those great providential works, both of those he had spoken of before, the works of providence, ordering men here in civils, as also of those works of providence in natural things, of which he comes to treat largely, both in the latter part of this Chapter, and in most of the next. Where we shall find *Elihu* giving us as it were a Systeme, or body of natural Philosophy in his discourse about the wonderfull works of God, which he is calling *Job* to consider.

J O B, Chap. 36. Vers. 27, 28.

27. *For he maketh small the drops of water : they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof;*

28. *Which the clouds do drop, and distill upon man abundantly.*

Elihu having shewed the greatness of God himself, in the former verse, proceeds to shew the greatness of his works; he had done it before as to Civil Administrations, and the ordering of humane affaires, in casting down and lifting up the sons of men; he doth it now in natural things, or in ordering the motions of nature, still in reference unto man. He describes the greatness of the works of God aloft or above in the Aire and in the Clouds, as he had before described the greatness of his works here below on the Earth.

The whole remainder of *Elihu's* speech in this Chapter and to the end of the 37th, is spent in a philosophical discourse about the Meteors, and those various operations and changes that are wrought in the Aire; he discourseth of Rain, of Thunder and Lightning, of Snow and Winds; from all which works of God in Nature, *Elihu* would convince *Job* of the Justice and Righteousness of God (as well as of his power) which was his chief purpose. He begins this philosophical Lecture or Lecture of divine Philosophy with the Rain, in the two verses now read; and he mingles much of that matter in this and the following Chapter. He speaks here, I say, of the Rain, which is a dispensation of God usually both very profitable & comfortable; what more profitable or more comfortable than the rain? It is also a dispensation of God sometimes very dreadfull and hurtfull: The Lord sends the very same Creature upon contrary services, sometimes for good, sometimes for evill; at one time as a blessing, and at another as a curse, to the inhabitants of the earth.

What *Elihu* speaks of the Rain in this Chapter, may be reduced to five heads.

First, He sheweth the manner of it's formation and generation, v. 27, 28.

Secondly,

Secondly, The vastness or huge extent of the vessels containing it, which are the clouds of the aire, spreading themselves all the Heavens over, v. 29.

Thirdly, He tells us of the sudden changes and successions of rain and faire weather, of a cloudy and serene sky, v. 30.

Fourthly, He sets forth the different purposes of God in dispensing the rain, which are sometimes for judgement, sometimes for mercy, v. 31, 32.

Fifthly, He intimates the Prognosticks of it, or what are the signes and fore-runners or foretellers of it, v. 33.

The two verses under-hand, hold out the first poynt, the formation and generation of the rain.

Vers. 27. *He maketh small the drops of water.*

That is, God (as it were) coynes and mints out the water into drops of rain: As a mighty masse of gold or silver is minted out into small pieces, so a huge body of water is minted out into small drops; that's the sum of these words according to our rendering. The Hebrew word rendred, *He maketh small*, hath a two-fold signification, and that hath caused a three-fold translation of these words.

First, It signifieth *to take away*, or, *to withdraw*; according to this signification of the word, a two-fold power of God is held forth about the drops of water.

First, The power of God in drawing the water up from the Earth to make rain, for that in Nature (as we shall see afterwards) is the cause of rain; God draws up the water from the Earth, which he sends down upon the Earth: he draws up the vapours, and the vapours become a Cloud, and the Cloud is dissolved into rain.

Secondly, The word may very well expresse, according to other texts of Scripture, the putting forth of the power of God in stopping, staying, keeping back and with-holding rain from the earth; when God hath drawn water from the earth, he can hold it from the earth as long as he pleaseth. The Chaldee Paraphrase saith, *He forbids the drops to water the earth*, or *he sends forth a prohibition to the clouds that they give no water*. The vulgar Latine speaks to the same sence, *who takes away drops of rain*, that is, *from the earth*. Mr. Broughton renders, *he withdraws*

וַיִּסְרֹחַ אֲדָמִית,
subtraxit.

Subtrahit de-
in stillas aquar-
um, scilicet ex ma-
ri, fluminibus
et locis humidis,
quæ surgunt
per vaporem ad nu-
bem ejus. Huius-
modi vapor ex
aqua cogitur in
nubem, quæ de-
inde fundit plu-
viam. Met.
Qui auferit stil-
las pluviae.

Vulg.

D d d

dropping

dropping of water. In this sence I find the word rendred expressly (*Numb. 9. 7.*) where certain persons are brought in by *Moses* thus complaining, *Wherefore are we kept back that we may not offer an offering to the Lord with the children of Israel?* It is a case; there were some, it seems, suspended from bringing their offerings to the Lord, and they demand a reason of it; to give which, *Moses* saith, *stand still, and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you.* But I quote that scripture only for the force of the word, *wherefore are we kept back, or with-held, which was for some uncleanness.* Thus you have the first signification of the word, and a double translation upon it, both very pertinent to the nature of the rain, and the Lords dealing with man in it, which is the subject *Elihu* is insisting upon.

וַיִּמְנַח
Minuit, dimi-
nuis.

Secondly, The original word signifies to diminish, or lessen, or make a thing small; so 'tis rendred (*Exod. 5. 8.*) when the children of *Israel* complained that they were oppressed in making brick. This commandement came from *Pharaoh*, *The tale of bricks which they did make heretofore, you shall lay upon them, you shall not diminish ought of it.* It is this word. Again (*Dent. 4. 2.*) *Ye shall not add to the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish ought from it.* Man must not make the word of God smaller or greater than it is. 'Tis high presumption to use either subtraction from, or addition to the word of God. Thus also the word is used in the case of second or double marriages (*Exod. 21. 10.*) *If he take him another wife, her food (that is the food of the first wife) her raiment, and her duty of marriage shall he not diminish.*

Our translator take up this sence of the word as noting the diminishing of a thing in the quantity of it. *He maketh small the drops of water, or, he makes the water fall in small drops;* whereas if the water were left to it self, it would poure down like a sea, or like a flood to sweep all away. This is the work of God, and though it be a common, yet it is a wonderful work; *He maketh small the drops of rain.* A drop is a small thing, and therefore the Prophet when he would shew what a small thing, or indeed, what a nothing man is, yea, all the nations of the earth are to God, saith (*Isa. 40. 15.*) *The nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the ballance. Behold, he taketh up the Isles as a very little thing.* The Spirit of God pitcheth

eth upon this comparison, when he would set forth that great distance between God and man. Man is but a drop to God.

But are not all drops small? why then doth he say, *He maketh small the drops?* The reason is because, though all drops are small, yet some drops are smaller than others, and we read of great drops in the Gospel History of Christs agony in the Garden, which was an immediate suffering in his soul, from the hand of his Father, pressing him with that weight of wrath, which was due for our sins (*Luke 22. 44.*) *He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood.* As God made Christ sweat great drops of blood for our sins, so he makes the Clouds to sweat small drops of water for our comfort. *He maketh small*

The drops of rain.

The Verb of this Substantive is used (*Joel 3. 18.*) *In those dayes it shall come to pass, that the mountaines shall drop down new wine; by which we are to understand, the plentiful effusion of the Spi it promised in the latter dayes.* David describing the Lords glorious march thorow the wilderness, saith (*Psal. 68. 8, 9.*) *The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of the Lord; thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance when it was weary.* Which Scripture principally intends the spiritual rain, which drops down upon believers, and refresheth their wearied souls: And therefore by a Metaphor, this phrase, to drop, signifies, to prophesie or preach the word of God; because that, like rain, falls silently, and as it were in drops upon the hearers, it falls in at the ear, and soaks down to the heart, it soaks quite thorow, as Moses spake (*Dent. 32. 2.*) *My doctrine shall drop as the rain, and my speech shall destil as the dew.* And as the word is used in Prophecies of mercy and instruction, so of judgment and desolation. Thus the Lord charged his Prophet (*Ezek. 20. 46.*) *Son of man, set thy face towards the south, and drop thy words towards the south, and prophesie against the forest of the south field.* Again (*Ezek. 21. 2.*) *Son of man, set thy face towards Jerusalem, and drop thy words towards the holy place, and prophesie against the land of Israel.* Once more (*Amos 7. 16.*) *Drop not thy word against the house of Isaac.* So that, I say, this dropping is used frequently, as in a natural, so in a spiritual sense. *He maketh small the drops*

DUJ
Guttavit, gut-
tation fluxit.

--- Sibi nris
Præceptum an-
ri-ulis hoc in-
stillare memon-
io. Horat. Lib.
1. Ep. 8.

Of water.

מים
Forma duali,
significatur
aqua duplices.

Rabbi Selo.
exponit,

מִיָּמִים
per
multipliat, quia
ita gutta-
tim aqua decit-
ant multipli-
cantur. Merc.

The word is of the *Dual Number* in the Hebrew, and so it signifies both sorts of water; the waters of heaven, and the waters of the earth, the upper and the nether waters, the upper waters in the Clouds, and the nether waters in the Springs. We find them spoken of together in the first of *Genesis* at the 7th verse; *God divided the waters which were under the firmament, from the waters which were above the firmament.* We find the upper waters spoken of singly (*Psal. 104. 3.*) *who layest the beams of the chambers in the waters*; Chambers are above. And in the first of *Genesis* at the 9th verse, we find the lower waters alone; *Let the waters be gathered together under the heavens.* Under-heaven waters are the lower waters. One of the Rabbies renders the words thus; *He multiplieth the drops of rain*; and the reason of it is (which falls in with our translation) because the less any one thing is made, the more is the general mass, out of which it is made, multiplied.

From the words thus far opened, we may note somewhat for our instruction.

Taking the former signification of the words, *He draweth up the drops of water,*

Observe;

The ordinary rain which watereth the earth, is first fetched from the earth.

Pluvia est va-
por calidus &
humidus ex a-
guis de locis hu-
midis virtute
Solis & stella-
rum, usque ad
medium aeri
regionem eleva-
tus, & ibi pro-
pter loci frigidi-
tatem in nubem
condensatus,
&c. Garc. de
Meteorol. part
2. cap. 25.

God raiseth vapours from the earth, and then watereth the earth with them. All the rain which falls upon the earth was raised from the earth. If I were to answer that question in nature, *What is Rain?* I might resolve it thus; *Rain is the moisture of the earth, drawn up by the heat of the Sun, into the middle Region of the Air, which being there condensed into clouds, is afterwards at the will of God, dissolved, and dropt down again in showers.* The Clouds, at the command of God, hold fast, and at his command they break and let out their waters upon the earth. This is, as was toucht before, a very ordinary, yet a very admirable work of God. As in spirituals, all those acts of grace in faith, and love, and joy, &c. by which our hearts and souls are carried up to heaven, come first from heaven; so that rain which comes down upon us from hea-
ven

ven, was first fetched from among us by the mighty power of God. Rain, according to natural Philosophy, is thus generated: The water and moisture of the earth being attenuated by the heat of the Sun-beams, become vapours, which being so rarified and resolved into an airy substance, are by the same heat of the Sun drawn up to the middle region of the air, where being again condensed or thickened into water, they melt down into rain, at the appointment of God.

We may consider rain briefly in all the causes of it; Thus: First, The efficient cause of rain is God.

Secondly, The instrumental cause is the heat of the Sun.

Thirdly, The material cause is the moisture of the Sea and watery Land.

Fourthly, The final cause of it, is, 1. Supream; the glory of God. 2. Subordinate; and that threefold. First, the benefit. Secondly, the punishment. Thirdly, the instruction of man.

Secondly, From that other signification of the word, as it notes withdrawing or keeping back, upon which some insist much,

Observe;

God when he pleaseth can with-hold the water or the rain.

He can give a stop to the rain, and then the clouds yeeld us no more water than a stone; *He with-holds the drops of water.* The Lord threateneth the Vineyard with this stop (*Isa. 5. 6.*) *I will command the clouds, that they rain no rain upon it;* which is true of a natural and proper Vineyard, and of proper natural rain, though it be meant there of the people of God, whom he metaphorically, or improperly, calleth his Vineyard; and the rain there intended, is the rain of instruction usually falling upon them. Now as God doth often forbid the showers of the word, that they fall no more upon a people, as he sends forth a prohibition to stop the spiritual rain; so he also stops and prohibits the natural rain (*Amos 4. 7, 8.*) *I have with-holden the rain from you, when there was yet three months to the harvest; and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city; one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered: so two or three cities wandered unto one city to drink water, but were not satisfied.* Thus in case of disobedience to his divine Law,

Law, the Lord threatened to stop the common Law of nature, and to make the heavens brass, and the earth iron (Dent. 28. 23.) And when the heavens are brass, that is, when they yeeld no more moisture than brass, then the earth is as iron, that is, it yeelds no more food for the sustentation of man or beast, than a bar of iron doth. Such stops the Lord hath often put upon the courses of nature, and can do again when he pleaseth; though I believe he never did, nor ever will do so, but when highly displeased and provoked by the sin of man.

Take two or three inferences from it.

First, *If the rain or drops of water come not in their season, let us acknowledge the hand of God.* It is God that hath lockt up the clouds when-ever they are lockt up; God hath forbidden the clouds to let down their rain when-ever they with-hold it. Men and Devils can no more stop the rain than make it.

Secondly, *When we want rain, let us go to God for it.* 'Tis the prerogative of God alone to help us in that streight; and therefore the holy prophet sends a challenge to all other powers, or declares them disabled for this help (Jer. 14. 22.) *Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain, or can the heavens give showers?* neither the one nor the other can. The heavens cannot dispose of a drop, though they possesse a sea of water. God must hear the heaven, before the heavens can hear the earth, that is, answer the necessities of the earth. And as the heavens cannot give man rain, so neither can the gods of mans making and placing there, such are all the vanities or vain Idols of the Gentiles. The prophet having shewed us that these cannot, sheweth us who can give rain in the next words, *Art not thou he, O Lord, our God* (surely thou art he) *therefore we will wait upon thee, for thou hast made all these things.* Solomon, at the dedication of the Temple, puts this as one special case wherein they were to apply to God by prayer (1 Kings 8. 35.) *When heaven is shut up and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee, If they pray, &c. then hear thou in heaven.* The prophet sends the people in that exigent to God (Zec. 10. 1.) *Ask ye of the Lord rain, in the time of the later rain.* As if he had said, if ye would have rain, you must ask for it, and be sure ye ask it of none but him; a *k of the Lord.* As it is God that gives out or with-holds the rain, so he gives it out or with-holds it at the voice of prayer. The Apostle saith of Elias (Jam. 5. 17.) *he was a man*
subject

subject to the like passions that we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth, by the space of three years and six months; and he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain. At his word the Lord stopt rain, and at his word he gave rain. Let us therefore confess that God is the author or father of the rain; He causeth vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth, he maketh lightnings for the rain (Ps. 135. 7.) He covereth the heaven with clouds, he prepareth rain for the earth (Ps. 147. 8.) God covereth the heaven with clouds, by drawing up vapours from the earth, which are the matter of these clouds, and in those clouds he prepares the rain, & by the rain sent down makes the grass to grow upon the mountains. The encrease of vegetables is the effect of rain; God hath the rain in his power, and to acknowledge him in it is our duty. *'Tis a great part of our spiritualness to acknowledge God in naturals as well as spirituals;* or, that the key of the clouds, as well as the key of the heart, is in the hand of God, and in his only. One of the Antients speaking to this point, said, *Let us not ascribe rain to the Saints, much less to Witches.* Papists have their Saints to whom they pray for rain, and Atheists go to Witches for rain. The modest and moderate Heathen will rise up against such in judgement; they ascribed rain to their gods though false gods; they had Eperhites or Titles of Honour for their Idols, testifying their faith in them and dependance upon them for the showers of heaven, they called them *shower-bringing gods, and fair-weather-making gods.* If heathens would yet ascribe the rain to their gods, not to men, not to any inferiour powers, how abominable are they, who professing the knowledge of Jehovah, the only true God, do not acknowledg him alone in this! In times of drought many will say, We hope we shall have rain when *the Moon changeth*, or, when *the Wind turns*; now though there be somewhat in nature, both in the change of the Moon and turn of the Winds, as to the change of weather, yet to speak much of, or expect any thing from either, argues some withdrawing of the heart from God; and God to shew the folly of such, hath often with-held the rain, though the Moon hath changed more than once, and the Wind turned to all quarters, and passed through all poynts of the Compass.

Thirdly, *Let us take heed of provoking the Lord; he can quickly stop our Comforts, those common outward comforts, the rain and* *showrs*

*Deu sibi Soli
clavem pluviæ
reservat Targ.
Hierosol. in
cap. 3. Gen.*

Imbriferi, serenatores.

shows of heaven, and then (as to this Life) in how sad a case are we! As the Lord hath not *left himself without witness* (namely of his goodness) *in sending rain and fruitful seasons*, so he can quickly leave a witness of his Justice, and displeasure, or of his just displeasure, by with-holding rain and (as a consequent of that) fruitful seasons from us. Were it only to have rain and fruitful seasons, we should take heed of displeasing God. If a man had such power as to with-hold rain from your land, you would take heed of displeasing him. How dangerous then is it to provoke God, who cannot only with-hold the rain from your land, but can, as the Scripture saith, make the rain of your land *to be powder and dust* (*Deut. 28. 24.*) that is, give you powder and dust instead of rain! When the rain is long with-holden the earth grows hard, and being much trodden or traveled on, dusty; this dust being raised up by the wind, shall come down instead of rain, or that's all the rain which I will give you. The Lord hath our natural comforts in his hand, as well as our spiritual and eternal.

Further, As this with-holding of the rain sometimes, so the holding up of the rain at any time, shews the great power of God; to hold the water in the aire is the work of God as much as to with-hold it from the earth. The water is a heavy body, and all heavy things tend downward: is it not a wonder that such a mighty weight of water should hang in the aire, and be there held up? if it were not held there, it would not stay there, but come down and drown all. What holds it up? the Cloud is a thin substance, yet it holds the water as well as the strongest vessel bound with hoops of iron; But by what power? doubtless by the power of God. The water hath no consistence in it self, it is a fluid slippery body, now what can hold the water that none of it leaks out, but the power of God? There are many millions of drops in one little cloud, and every drop is of it self ready to slip away, yet the whole cloud yeelds no more water then a rock till God orders it. Let us contemplate the Almightyness of God, who can hold such a mighty body of water in the aire, or who (as *Job* spake, *Chap. 26. 8.*) *bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them.*

These notes arise from that translation, which imports the Lords power in drawing the water from the earth, as also in with-holding it from the earth when there is need, and in holding it when there is no need.

We

We translate, *He maketh small the drops of water.* Not only hath God made the body of the water, which is one of the four general Elements, of which all bodies are compounded and made, but he makes the water into *small drops*, or *maketh small the drops of water.*

Hence note;

That the water falls from heaven by drops, comes to pass by the especial power, wisdom and goodness of God.

The water, if left to it self, would fall whole like a sea upon us, or like a mighty flood, in such quantities as would, instead of refreshing, overwhelm the earth. When God drowned the world, it is said (*Gen. 7. 11.*) *The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows (or flood-gates) of heaven were opened.* We are not to imagine that heaven hath windows or flood-gates; but God did not put forth his mighty power to make small the drops of rain, but let it come all at once: those waters which were before bound up in the clouds, by the decree of God, were now, by his decree, let loose in a wonderful manner and measure, and came down, not in drops, but in streames and spouts; the clouds did not (as formerly) destitute their burden, but ease themselves of it at once, or altogether. Rain ordinarily (as sweat through the Pores of the skin) passeth by degrees through the Pores of the Clouds, yet God can let it out all at once. Sea-men, who take long Voyages, tell us, they meet with spouts of water, endangering great ships. So then, this *making small the drops of water*, is to be ascribed to a threefold Attribute of God.

Pluvia in nubibus, velut in limbo continetur, atque in illis velut compressa guttatim distillat.

First, It is a work of his power, nor is it done without a kind of Miracle, that the water comes down, as it were, through a sieve, or watering-pot.

Secondly, It is a work of divine wisdom. The Lord knowing that the earth cannot digest huge portions of water at once, divides it into little portions, that the earth may gradually receive and let it soak into its bosom, for the feeding of Plants, and the supply of all creatures that live upon it.

Thirdly, 'Tis a work also of divine Goodness; for if God did not make small the drops of water, if it should come down whole it would drown the earth, instead of comforting and fattening it. Behold then, the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God in *making small the drops of water!*

E e e

Though

Plane admirabilem et reuerendum in illa et per illa sese exhibet deum. Merc:

Though Philosophers have attempted to find out and assigne a reason in Nature, about this falling of the rain in drops, yet they have not fully attained the reason why, nor the manner how, God doth this; we must ascribe it chiefly to the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, in ordering it for the benefit of man, yea of all living creatures. And surely *Elihu* leads us to consider the wonders of those things which are common and naturall, to convince us, that forasmuch as we cannot clearly see the reason of those lesser things, we should take heed of prying into greater and remoter secrets; and he would have *Job* particularly know, that seeing he could not find out the way of God in these natural things, much less could he find out the way and whole designe of God in those his providential dealings with him: *He maketh small the drops of water*; and then as it followeth in this verse,

They pour down rain according to the vapour thereof.

PPI fundit, fundendo purgavit aëre, nempe colatus excolatus, de factus fuit. Imber, nimbus plu. ia.

Though the water be made into small drops, yet he doth not say, they drop down, but *they pour down rain*; that is, the drops fall plentifully; that frequent expression, in Scripture, of *pouring down*, every where implyeth plenty or abundance. The promise of *pouring out the Spirit in the latter dayes*, notes the abundance of the Spirit that shall then be given. The word signifies also to *straine*, implying that the rain is contained in the Clouds, as it were in a linnen cloath, which being pressed, distills the water in small streams or drops, as it were through a strainer. *They pour down*

Rain.

מן pluvia, hinc רמתי verbum transitivum in Hiphil significat, se it plueret, quo certe innuitur deum esse Authorem pluviae. Egius in Gen:

There are three words in the Latine, the first of which notes a shewre or gentle rain; the second, a stormy or fierce rain; the third, rain in generall. Rain, in this place, may be taken in all or either of these notions, for at one time or other the Clouds pour down drops into all sorts of rain. Rain (as I said) is made of vapours drawn up, and here he saith, *They pour down rain*.

According to the vapour thereof.

There are two sorts of vapours; there are dry vapours, and moist vapours; dry vapours (say Naturalists) are the matter of the wind, and the moist are the matter of the rain; Now saith *Elihu*,
the

they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof; that is, look in what proportion the Sun draweth the vapours into the Aire, in that proportion doth the rain fall upon the Earth; or, in the same proportion that the vapour is drawn up, in that proportion is the rain let down.

Some render the word which we translate vapour, a cloud, that is, after the water is drawn up into a Cloud, it pours down rain proportionably. Another translation renders it, Affliction or trouble, and give the whole verse thus; He draweth up the drops of water, which poured down rain to their Calamity. This the learned Author applyeth particularly to the Flood in Noahs time; but I shall not stay upon that. Our reading is clear; They pour down rain according to the vapour thereof; that is, in the same proportion on that vapours come up, the rain falls down.

First, In that, as the rain is made of the vapour, so according to the vapour, or in proportion to the vapour, such are the showres of rain; Note;

According to what is naturally received, returns are naturally made.

And if the Clouds of Heaven return to man naturally according to that they receive from the Earth; how is man on earth bound morally, or in duty, to return according to what he receives from Heaven. Let us mind our accordings and proportions to the dealings and dispensations of God. The Clouds of the aire will condemn us, at least witness against us, if we receive much, and return little. I passe this. Only here we may take notice of six things in Concatination one with another: First, vapours are drawn up from the Earth: Secondly, they are made into watery Clouds: Thirdly, from thence they are sent back to moisten the Earth: Fourthly, the rain sent down is proportionable to the vapour that went up: Fifthly, according to that proportion, the Earth is made more or lesse fruitfull; plentifull rains cause or produce plentifull fruits ordinarily from the Earth, and little rains little fruits: Sixthly, and lastly, man is nourished and hath his outward Comforts encreased or lessened in proportion to the fruits which the Earth bringeth forth, or to the fruitfulness of the Earth. All these things attend and depend upon one another. They pour down according to the vapour thereof, and God draws up

*Pluvia quasi
fluvia, eo qd
fluum. litor.
Quæ fundunt
pluviam post
nebulam ejus.
Pisc:
Id significat
vaporem et nu-
bem, significat
etiam calamita-
tem; hinc
versu ita ver-
titur, nam sub-
stantia stillas a-
quarum, quæ
fundeant plu-
viam ad cala-
mitatem ejus.
Jun:*

in proportion to what himself purposeth they shall pour down. Thus we see, how God by the Sun draws out the moisture and sap of the Earth, to return it back with advantage. Drawing up the moisture makes the Earth languish, and her fruits wither; sending it down again, makes the Earth green, flourishing and fruitful. *They pour down rain, &c.* And what more? *Elihu* answers

Verf. 28. *Which the Clouds do drop.*

שָׁחֳקִים *nunc*
Caelum, *nunc*
nubes denotat,
a tenuissima
eorum Substan-
tia. Druf.

Here he speaks more expressly, and tells us more clearly than before, what the vapours are made up into, *According to the vapour thereof, which the Clouds do drop.* As Clouds are made of vapours, so they are the receptacles or vessels of rain, which they hold (as was shewed before) as long as God pleaseth, and when he gives the word, then they drop

And distill upon man abundantly.

That's another elegant word, implying the manner in which the rain comes or falls, it is as by a distillation. Here also 'tis expressed for whose use or sake principally the rain is sent. *The Clouds* (saith the Text) *drop and distill upon man*, yet we know men get themselves out of the rain as soon and as fast as they can. The rain falls upon the earth, and abides there; yet 'tis said to distill upon man, because the rain distills at mans request, and for mans sake: That other creatures are cherished by the rain, is not for themselves, but for man, as man is not cherished and maintained by those creatures for himself, but for God. As the rain distills chiefly for the glory of God, so nextly for the relief and comfort of man; and for man it distills

Abundantly.

טְלֵי אֲדָמָה
Super homi-
nem multum,
vel super ho-
mines affluen-
ter, ut רַבּ *fit*
adverbium,
quod eo minus
se probat mihi,
quia Rab. hic
scribitur eum
Cameiz. Druf.

There is a double reading of this word. Some take it as an Adjective to the Substantive *man*, rendring thus, *it distills upon many men*; we take it adverbially, *which distill upon man plentifully*, that is, in great plenty upon man. We may take in both readings without strain to the Text, or departure from the matter in hand. For as the rain falls or distills upon man abundantly, so upon abundance of men; the rain, we know, falls sometimes very plentifully, and at times, or one time or other all the world over, watering every mans ground, and serving every mans turn or occasions. There-

Therefore *Elihu* expresseth the blessing fully when he saith, *The Clouds distill upon man abundantly, or upon abundance of men.*

Hence Note, First;
The Lord hath rain enough in store;

He hath vessels plentifully filled for the watering of the Earth; and, *The Lord is so free in his dispensation of the rain*, that as he gives it to many in number, so to many in kind, he maketh his rain to fall, (as well as his Sun to shine) *upon the just, and on the unjust*, (*Matth. 5. 45.*) It shews the exceeding goodness, as well as the bounty of God, that the evill partake of his benefits as well as the good.

And, for our further improvement of this bounty of God, remember, that if God be so abundant and liberall in blessings to us, we ought in proportion to abound in duty towards him, or (as the Apostle exhorts, *1 Cor. 15. 58.*) we should be *stedfast and immovable, alwayes abounding in the work of the Lord*. Some do only a little, (I may say) only here a stitch and there a stitch of work for God, but we should abound in it; and that not only now and then by fits, but be alwayes-fixed in it, especially we should do so, with respect to that, which the rain is a Symbol of, the word of God. When God drops and distills the rain of Gospel truths and holy soul-saving instructions abundantly upon us, how should we abound in every good word and work! It was prophesied of Christ (*Psal. 72. 6.*) *He shall come down as rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth*. Some of the Ancients expound that place of the coming down of Christ in his Incarnation; then indeed he came down like rain upon the mown grass, he came down sweetly and powerfully. 'Tis true also that Christ, who is God, the Word, the substantial Word, comes down as rain in and with the declarative word of God preached and faithfully dispenced to the souls of men: and when Christ comes down thus to us, we should rise up to him, and return fruits of grace, according to the showres of grace, which we have received. The Prophet gives us an elegant comparison of the natural and spiritual rain in their effects and issues, (*Isa. 55. 10, 11.*) *For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall*

shall my word be, that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me voyd, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it. Now what is the pleasure of God in giving his Word? what is the arrand upon which he sends it? 'Tis I grant, sometimes to harden, deafen and blind a people, (*Isa. 6. 9, 10.*) 'tis sometimes to be a favour of death unto death, (*2. Cor. 2. 16.*) These are dreadfull judiciary purposes of God in sending his Word; nor doth it ever please the Lord to send his Word upon this arrand, but when he is sorely displeased by a peoples slighting and contempt of his Word. The thing which primarily pleaseth him, the purpose which he chiefly pursueth in sending his Word, is, that his people may have (as the Apostle speaks) *Their fruit unto holiness in this life, and in the end everlasting life.* For these ends, the Lord is daily distilling upon us the rain of his Word, both in commands and promises, and in both abundantly. Therefore let us labour to abound in returns of faith, of love, of hope, of self-deniall, of zeal for God, and of fruit-bearing unto God. If when God distills the natural rain, that should provoke us to fruitfulness in spiritualls, how much more when he pours down so much spiritual rain upon us! For the close of this meditation, consider, That

As the natural rain, First, softens the earth, and mollifies it; Secondly, cleanseth the earth, and washeth it; Thirdly, enricheth the earth, and makes it fruitfull; Fourthly, comforts the earth, and makes every thing that moves upon it, and grows out of it, to rejoyce; Fifthly, sometimes drowns the earth, and destroys the Inhabitants of it: As I say, the natural rain doth all these things, so also doth the spiritual rain, the word of God. That, First, mollifieth; Secondly, cleanseth; Thirdly, fructifieth; Fourthly, comforteth the hearts of all those that receive it; and Fifthly, The rain of the word drowns and destroys all those that rise up against it, or will not receive it.

J O B, Chap. 36. Vers. 29, 30, 31.

29. *Also, can any understand the spreadings of the Clouds, or the noise of his Tabernacle?*

30. *Behold, he spreadeth his light upon it, and covereth the bottom of the sea.*

31. *For by them he judgeth the people, he giveth meat in abundance.*

Elibu having spoken of the wonderfull work of God in forming and sending rain in the two former verses, speaks next of the Clouds, which are as vessels containing the rain, and in which the rain is carried and conveyed up and down the world for the use of man, or for those services, to which God hath appointed it. He begins with a denying Question:

Vers. 29. *Also, can any understand the spreading of the Clouds?*

As if he had said, To what I said before, I adde this, Here is another secret in nature, *Can any understand the spreading of the Clouds?* He doth not say, can vulgar ignorant and unlearned persons understand, but can any? Can the wisest? can the most learned? Can the best studied Philosophers *understand the spreading of the Clouds?* *Can they understand?* That is, they cannot understand.

But have not men, especially learned men, understanding enough to ascend the clouds, and discover the nature of them? Surely their understandings are very mean, or very much clouded, who understand not what the spreading of the clouds meaneth.

I answer, though *Elibu's* question hath a negation in it, yet not a total negation, he doth not exclude the understanding of men wholly out of the clouds; he only denieth man a full understanding of all things which concern either the nature or motion of the clouds. Wise men understand much about the spreading of the clouds, but they cannot understand all. The best of godly men understand not much, or see but a little way into spiritual things: And the wisest of worldly men do not, cannot, see all in natural things.

things. *Can any understand*

The spreading of the Clouds?

מפר שי עב
Expansiones
vel differentias
nubium, cum
aliæ steriles
sint, aliæ plu-
viam, aliæ
grandinem mit-
tant; Sed re-
stus expansio-
nes ventur.
Merc:

Here are, First, the Clouds; Secondly, the spreading of them. The word which we translate, *spreading*, hath a two-fold significa- tion: First, (with the alteration only of a poynt upon one letter) it signifieth *The difference of things in any kinde*: And then the Text is read, *Can any understand the difference of the Clouds*, that is, the variety that is among the clouds. The clouds are not all of a likeness, nor all of a bigness; there are clouds of many sorts and sizes: there are clouds which breed snow, and clouds which breed haile, clouds which breed raine, and clouds which breed thunder and lightning. Some clouds are empty, called clouds *without raine or water*, (*Pro. 25. 14. Jude, v. 12.*) and other clouds are full of water: There is a difference also of clouds as to our sight and view, some are black, some white, some red, some are greenish, others palish clouds, from which various colours and appearances, Prognosticks are made of the change of weather, as Christ told the Pharisees (*Mat. 16. 2, 3.*) Naturalists observe very many differences in the clouds, nor is it without wonder, that the clouds which are made all of one matter (vapours drawn from below) should produce such and so many different effects, that (according to this reading) we have reason to put the ques- tion, *Who can understand the differences of the Clouds?* We read it, and that well and full to the Hebrew Text,

*Who can understand the spreadings of the Clouds, or their ex-
pansion?*

The most cunning and knowing men in the mysteries of nature, cannot either tell how far the clouds will spread, or to what poynt and part of the world they will convey their water, and (as I may say) unburden themselves. Thus the words refer back to the two former verses. The Clouds are spread as a Cur- rain, or as a piece of Tapestry, or as a mighty Canopy; *Who can understand the spreading of them?* The spreading of them; First, as they carry raine; or, Secondly, the spreading of them (as some expound the place) as they convey the Lightning, which the Scripture saith, (*Math. 24. 27.*) *Passeth from one end of heaven to the other*, from the East to the West; who knoweth how far the

the Lightning will spread in the Clouds? Thus some connect it with the following verse. *Who can understand the spreading*

Of the Clouds?

There is a special derivation of the word rendred *Clouds*, from the Hebrew, Greek, and Latine, all pretending to the nature of the Clouds: The Hebrew word properly noteth the thickness or grossness of the Clouds; the Greek word noteth the dropping nature of the Clouds, being derived from a roote which signifieth *to drop*, or (which is near the same) *to descend*, the roote word signifying *to fall*; the Latine word is taken from covering, because the Clouds mask or cover the face of Heaven, and often hide and screine the shining of the Sun from us.

מב מubes a
densitate est
crassamentum
aeris.
νέφελον vel a
βύβλιν jillare,
vel a βάλλω
cadere.

Now because *Elihu* is upon a work of nature, and insists upon it all along in the next Chapter; I shall therefore to clear the matter, propose and answer three Questions concerning the Clouds.

First, What is a Cloud, or what is the nature of the Clouds?
A cloud is a moist vapour drawn up from the earth or water by the heat of the Sun into the middle region of the Aire (as Naturalists divide the Aire) where being by the coldness of the place congealed, and as it were knit together, it hangerh and continueth there, till it be broken up at the dispose of God, and sent down for the comfort or correction of man in raine, snow, haile, &c. The clouds of heaven derive their pedigree from the moisture found on earth, and to the earth they return their moisture.

Secondly, Seeing the Clouds are such mighty bodies, and contain (as I may say) whole seas of water in them, and water, being a heavy body, naturally descends or tends downward (as all heavy things do) it may be questioned (and indeed it is a wonder) how those Clouds are kept aloft in the Aire? how comes it to pass that such heavy bodies, such floods of water do not presently fall violently, and at once shed themselves down upon, and overwhelm the earth? To that I answer,

First, Some say the Clouds are kept up by that natural inbred heat or warmth which is included in them; or that they are kept up by the superiour heat of the Sun, and Stars, which first drew them up.

Secondly, Others say, these mighty Clouds are held up by

F f f

the

the wind ; which keeping them in perpetual motion, they fall not, they descend not, but according to a divine order, by which they are disposed of to several uses.

Thirdly, Others ascribe it to the hollowness or spunginess of their nature, which receiving and taking in the thin aire, they are more easily kept up.

But when we have searched to the utmost for reasons in nature, we must rise higher, and resolve the question according to Scripture and divine Philosophy, into the power and will of God. The holding up of the Clouds is Gods work as well as the raising of them up ; He gave this law or command unto the Clouds in the day of their creation, that they should not fall down nor distill a drop, but by his own commandement and appoyntment. Thus we find it exprested by *Moses* in his description of the creation, (*Gen. 1. 6.*) *Let the firmament (that is, the aire, the inferiour aire next to the middle region) divide the waters from the waters.* Here is a divine sanction; there are waters above, and waters below ; And saith God, *Let the firmament divide the waters from the waters ;* that is, those waters that are drawn up into Clouds in the aire, a provision for Raine, &c. let them be kept above, and divided from the Sea and waters that dwell below. Thus there was a Law at first to keep quarter, as I may say, between those waters. And *Solomon* speaking of the eternal Son of God, of his co-eternity with the Father, brings him (under the name of Wisdome) speaking thus of himself ; *I was with him* (when he did this and that, and among the rest, *Prov. 8. 28.*) *When he established the Clouds above ;* that is, when God made a Decree that the Clouds should stay above, and not come down but at his call. So 'tis exprested (*Job 26. 8.*) *God bindeth up the waters in the thick Cloud, and the Cloud is not rent under them.* 'Tis not of it self that the Cloud (having such a weight in it) doth not rent and break, but, saith God, it shall not. (*Pro. 30. 4.*) *He hath bound the waters in a garment.* But what is the garment ? His own decree and purpose is the garment which bindeth up the waters. For as the waters of the Sea are bounded by the Decree of God (*Job 38. 11.*) So likewise the waters in the aire are bound up by his Decree (*Psal. 148. 4, 6.*) *Praise him ye heaven of heavens, and ye waters which are above the heavens ; he hath established them for ever, and hath made a decree which shall not pass.*

Zanch: de o-
peribus dei.
l. 2. c. 1.

pass. He hath established the waters which are above the heavens, as well as the waters below the heavens; he hath established them by a decree (like that of the *Medes* and *Persians*) which shall not be disannulled. So then, here's the answer to this second question, How it comes to pass, that the Clouds containing such floods of water (which is an heavy body) do not descend and overwhelm the earth? This is by the power and decree, or by the powerful decree of God, who hath caused such a weak and thin substance, as the Clouds, made up only of Vapours, to hold those mighty waters close, and keep them prisoners, that not a spoonful shall shed forth till himself pleaseth. The Clouds, as some have well expressed it, are like sponges filled with water, and till God layeth his hand upon the Clouds (that is, till he gives a word) and as I may say, squeezeth or presseth them by his providence (as we squeeze a sponge full of water) the waters fall not. Thus we see the reason, why *Elihu* makes so great a matter of the spreading of the Clouds, and why the waters fall not presently together, nor presently drop out of them, but in their season.

A third *Querie* concerning the Clouds may be this; *Why are they placed above? What is their use?*

I answer, The use of the Clouds may be considered two ways; first, there is a natural, secondly, a spiritual use of them.

First, there is a natural use of them, and that is twofold.

First, That they may contain water in a readiness to moisten and fatten the earth: Stores and treasures of rain are kept in them to supply the necessities of all earthly creatures.

Secondly, The natural use of the Clouds is, to temper the heat of the air, and to be as a Curtain, or Screen between us and the Sun. If the Sun should alwayes shine fully upon the earth, we were not able to abide it; but the Clouds coming between, do exceedingly qualifie and moderate the heat and fierceness of the Sun. These, besides others, are their natural uses.

And if we look into the Scripture, we shall find many spiritual and gracious uses, for which God hath made the Clouds.

First, God hath set his Bow in the Clouds, as a token of his favour unto mankind, as a token of his general favour, that he will not drown the world again (*Gen. 9. 14, 15.*) And it shall come to pass, when I bring a Cloud over the Earth, that the Bow shall be

seen in the Cloud; and I will remember my Covenant which is between me and you, and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood, to destroy all flesh. This is alluded to by the Prophet (*Isa. 54. 9.*) as a token of the special favour of God to his People, that he will never break Covenant with them. When Believers see his Bow in the Cloud, they may be as well assured, that they shall be freed from a deluge of wrath, as that the world shall not be overwhelmed again with a deluge of waters.

Secondly, We find the Lord making use of a Cloud, or using the ministry of a Cloud, in a gracious way, for the conducting of his People out of *Egypt* quite through the Wilderness unto *Canaan*. That I grant was more than an ordinary Cloud, and lower and nearer the earth than usually Clouds are, yet it was doubtless of the same nature with other Clouds (*Exod. 13. 21. Neh. 9. 19.*) And therefore, when the Prophet would assure the Church of guidance and protection, he tells them (*Isa. 3. 5.*) *The Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Sion, and upon her assemblies, a Cloud and Smoak by day, and the shining of the flaming Fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence.* And we at this day, may make this spiritual use (according to Scripture) of the Clouds, which we behold, as to mind us how the Lord both protected and guided the People of *Israel* through the wilderness, so to assure us that he will protect and guide us through the World. Christ is this Cloud, a covering protecting Cloud unto his Church; and we may sweetly meditate upon him, not only when we behold the Sun, but as often as we behold the clouds.

Further, As Christ serves his Church like a Cloud, so the Clouds have done and shall do many services to Christ. A bright Cloud overshadowed Christ in his transfiguration (*Mat. 17. 5.*) A Cloud received him out of the Apostles sight at his ascension (*Act. 1. 9.*) and he shall come again in the Clouds to judgment (*Mat. 24. 30. Luke 21. 27.*) He is also represented sitting upon a white Cloud (*Rev. 14. 14.*)

Thirdly, The Spirit of God gives us another gracious use of, and meditation upon the Clouds; that as often as we see thick and black Clouds, which threaten a grievous storm, scattered, and the air cleared, this should put us in mind of the abundant grace

of

of God pardoning our sin (Isa. 44. 22.) *I have blotted, as a thick Cloud, thy transgression, and as a Cloud thy sins.* False and faithless Ministers are called *Clouds without water* (Jude v. 12.) And the faithful Ministers of the Gospel, *flee as a Cloud* to water Souls, as the converted Gentiles are said, *to flee as doves to the windows* (Isa. 60. 8.) There are not only natural but spiritual uses and improvements to be made of the Clouds, as often as we behold them; and the Scripture in many places, leads and points us to such meditations. It is said of *Luther*, that once beholding a great Cloud, that promised, or had a great appearance of rain, in a time of drought, blown away and dispelled, without yeelding one drop of rain to refresh the earth; he turned to some of his friends, and said, Such are the Promises of the world. Men, said he, make great and fair promises, pretending much good, and good-will to those to whom they are made, which yet vanish and come to nothing; and concluding his observation upon the deceitful appearance of the Cloud, added the words of Solomon (Prov. 25. 14.) Who so boasteth himself of a false gift, is like clouds without rain. Such especially are all false teachers, they, if any, boast themselves of a false gift, that is, they either pretend to a gift which they have not, or they pretend their gift is of Christ, when it is not; these are like Clouds without rain, or (as the text in the Epistle of Jude, even now mentioned) calls them, they are Clouds without water, carried about of winds, that is, which way so ever the wind of outward respects and advantages bloweth, they are carried.

Tales sunt promissiones mundi.

So much for answer to those three questions about the Clouds.
Who can understand the spreading of the Clouds?

Hence note;

First, Even natural things exceed the reach of mans understanding.

How much more do spiritual things, the mysteries of Grace!

Nichodemus was a knowing man, a Master in *Israel*, yet how simply did he speak when Christ proposed to him, and presented him with the necessity of a new-birth! Nor hath a natural man a clearer insight in any other Gospel mystery (1 Cor. 2. 14.) *The natural man receiveth not the things of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* But he that is spiritual judgeth (or discerneth) all things; that is, he hath a principle of spi. i-

spiritual understanding, whereby he is able to make a right judgment of all things necessary to his own edification and salvation.

Again ;

If the natural things which God hath made (the spreading of the Clouds) exceed our understanding, then how much more doth God himself who made them !

Who can understand the spreadings of God ? the immensity of God ? the eternity, the omnipotency, the infinity of God ? That's the thing *Elihu* chiefly aims at in all this discourse. While he poseth *Job*, and all men, in the natural works of God, he would convince *Job*, and all men, that neither he was, nor any man is able to comprehend the equity and righteousness of his proceeding in the darker wayes of Providence. And this he did, because *Job* had too often (upon the matter) called God to answer, asking why it was so ? instead of a silent submission to what he did not understand, nor could see the reason of.

Further, consider this particular in nature, *The spreading of the Clouds*. We see the Clouds every day, and we see their spreadings, that's common and obvious to the eye ; yet (saith *Elihu*) who can understand these spreadings ? There is a greater latitude in the Clouds than we imagine ; and if we cannot fully understand the things which we see, how can we understand what we see not ? Who apprehends the true greatness of the Clouds, the greatness of the Moon, the greatness of the Stars, the greatness of the Sun ; all which our eyes behold ? We can neither understand by our eye, nor by the rules and reports of the greatest Astronomers, the true magnitude or greatness of those heavenly visible bodies ; who then can take the true dimension (if I may so speak) of things invisible ? *Who can understand the spreading of the Clouds ?*

Or the noise (or noises) of his Tabernacle.

מְרִימָה The word notes a dreadful noise, a noise with a tumult, such a
 a **מְרִימָה** sonit, noise as is made when ruine and desolation cometh upon a place,
 persreput, de. such a noise as the Prophet describeth in a time of war. *Moab*
 notat sonitum shall die with a tumult (*Amos 2. 2.*) *Who can understand the*
 tumultus bellici noise of his tabernacle ?
 Rab. Shelo.

This noise may be expounded two wayes ;

First,

First, Of thunder-claps. When Clouds are discharged, their thunder-bolts, like cannon bullets, rattle through the air: *Who can understand this noise of his tabernacle?* As no man can at all understand the thunder of his power (Chap. 26. 14.) so not the All of his powerful thunder. This is a truth, and the text may well take in that noise, the noise of the thunder. But because *Elihu* speaks professedly and expressly of thunder in the next Chapter (vers. 4.) therefore (I conceive) *the noise of his tabernacle*, here may be some-what else, or less than that of thunder, that is, *the noise of the winds*, breaking out from the tabernacle of God. What a bustling noise, what an out-cry (as I may say) the winds make we all know, especially when they become stormes, and are not only winds but tempests. There are sweet gentle gales of wind, which make but a little murmur, or whisper in the air, we can scarce hear their voice; but some winds roar, some winds come little short of thunder, for noise and loudness, and I suppose *Elihu* chiefly intends this noise, by *The noise*

Of his tabernacle.

But what is the tabernacle of God? I answer; That word *Tabernacle* is often used in the Old Testament; properly it signifieth a tent in war, a military mansion, a sitting habitation, or portable house, having no fixed or settled seat. The tabernacle under the Law was the place appointed by God for publick worship. We read also of the *Feast of Tabernacles* (Lev. 23. 34.) at which solemn Feast, the *Jews* dwelt seven dayes in tents, to put them in remembrance, that God made their fore-fathers dwell in tents when he brought them out of *Egypt*, as also to mind them, that here they had no abiding place, but were to seek one to come. And as this place of publick worship, so any place for private dwelling was called a tabernacle. Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, until &c. (Said David, Ps. 132. 3.) that is, into my house, which though it be a royal Palace, yet I look upon it, but as a movable tabernacle. But doth God dwell in a movable house? God is immovable, he makes no removes, yet wheresoever God is pleased to shew himself in his power and marvelous works, there we may say his tabernacle is. The tabernacle of God, where this noise, this mighty noise is made, is nothing else but the Clouds before spoken of. The

Tabernaculum hic מִדְּבָרָא dicitur unde Festum Succoth i. e. Tabernaculorum.

Clouds are Gods tabernacle; they are called so expressly by a word of very near cognition unto this (*Psal. 18. 11.*) *He maketh the Clouds his pavilion.* A pavilion is an extraordinary tabernacle; a pavilion is that tabernacle which is proper to a King or to the General of an Army. Now saith the Psalmist, *He maketh the Clouds his pavilion;* In them he shews his power and glory. They are also called the chariots of God (*Psal. 104. 3. Dent. 32. 6.*) and he is said to come in the Clouds, as a Prince in his chariot. He came in a thick Cloud (*Exod. 19. 9.*) and he descended in a Cloud (*Exod. 34. 5.*) which here is called his tabernacle. So then, the Clouds, together with all that middle region of the air, where the rain now, and fiery meteors, are generated, are in Scripture allegorically called, the tabernacle of God; because there he seems often to dwell or reside, for the producing of many wonderful works upon this inferiour world. We may take the word here in a double allusion unto a tabernacle, or unto two sorts of tabernacles.

First, There were ordinary tabernacles, wherein men dwelt. The ancient Hebrews dwelt in tents or tabernacles; these were tabernacles for civil use, or for habitation; in allusion unto which, the Apostle speaks of the body, wherein the soul dwells (*2 Cor. 5.*) *When the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, we know, that we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

Secondly, There were tabernacles for military use, souldiers tents, or tabernacles. As the whole heavens, so the clouds especially may be called the tabernacle of God in both respects; they are his house, wherein he sits unseen, and doth wonders all the world over; in them he sheweth his power, and appears gloriously, and as a great Prince or mighty General he sends out his edicts and orders from the clouds, he commands winds, stormes, tempests, snow & haile for several dispensations to go from thence, according as his own infinite wisdom seeth fit, and the cases of men require, whether in wayes of Judgment or of mercy; as *Elisha* tells us, yet more distinctly, at the 31th verse, *For by them* (saith he) *judgeth he the people, he giveth meat in abundance.* The clouds are very fit and commodious for Gods use in any of these respects; either for the terrifying and punishing of the wicked, or, for the helping and feeding of them that fear him. Now for
asmuch

asmuch as the clouds are called the tabernacle of God upon these accounts,

Learn first ;

There God is said to be especially, where he especially workes.

God is no more in one place of the world than in another, as to his being and existence; for he is every where, he filleth heaven and earth. We must not think that God is shut up in the clouds as a man in his tabernacle; but because God workes much in the clouds, and doth great things by the rain, thunder and lightening, therefore the cloudes, whence these Meteors issue, are called his tabernacle. Where-ever God works much, he is said to dwell. Why is God said to dwell with them that are of an humble and contrite heart? even because he workes much in them, and much by them. So because many great works of God are done in the Clouds, as we shall see more particularly hereafter, therefore the Lord is said to dwell there as in his tabernacle.

Secondly, When 'tis said, *Who can understand the noise of his tabernacle?*

Observe ;

The most dreadful storms and tempests, the roaring winds which we hear at any time, are sent out by God, they are the noise of his tabernacle ;

They go when he saith go, (Psal. 148. 8.) *Stormy winds and tempests fulfilling his will.* We may think, stormes, of all things, least under command and order, yet they are under an exact order. The most stormy winds go not an haire's breadth besides, or beyond the commission which God gives them. As often as we hear the roaring noise of the wind, much more, of thunder, let us remember, 'tis the noise of his tabernacle.

Vers. 30. *Behold, he spreadeth his light upon it, and covereth the bottom of the sea.*

Elihu insists still upon the workes of God, *He spreadeth his light.* Some understand by this *light*, the *lightening*; and it is a great truth, God wonderfully spreads the lightening upon the dark clouds, as if they were all in a flame, That's clear to the eye when it-lighteneth; and God is sayd (Psal. 144. 6.) *To cast forth*

forth his lightening; which comes neer this word in the text, he spreadeth it. But because in the next chapter *Elihu* speaks purposely of the lightening, therefore I shall not stay upon that sence here, but decline it.

Rather take light in the common notion; *He spreadeth his light*, that is, *the light of the Sun*, which is eminently called Gods Light, upon it, that is, upon the cloud spoken of in the former verse, and to the two parts of this verse, yeild us a description (as I conceive) of the weather-changes made by God. When we have had much rain and stormes, God can presently spread his light upon the cloud, that is, cause the light and heat of the Sun to conquer the clouds and scatter them.

וְשִׁטָּה

*Radices maris
sunt profundis-
sime infimaq;
illius partes.*

And (he also) covereth the bottom of the Sea. That is, by and by, he makes it very dark by the gathering of thick clouds, even as dark as the bottom of the Sea, whither the light cannot come, or dark to the bottom of the Sea. The original is, *the roots of the Sea*, that is, the lowest parts of the Sea, which we significantly translate, *the bottom of the Sea*. Some explicate the whole verse, *He spreads his light upon the face of the whole heavens, and spreads the waters over the Ocean, so that no bottom can be seen, scarcely found*. Mr. Broughton, by the roots of the Sea, understands the earth. Another saith, he makes mention of the roots of the Sea, because the waters of the Sea, are as it were the roots of the Clouds, they chiefly supplying the matter of which they are made. Vapours drawn from the waters of the Sea, by the heat of the Sun, become Clouds, and these Clouds cover both Earth and Sea, far and near. Thus 'tis matter of wonder to see such great and sudden changes in the air; that the same Sun with its beames should exhale those vapours which are condensed into Clouds, and that soon after, those Sun-beams should scatter and dissolve those Clouds; or that now the heavens should be so masked with Clouds as to make all dark, and in a little space, all return to its former brightness and beauty.

He spreadeth his Light. What is there in the world that is not Gods? Here he calleth Light his.

Hence note;

God loves to entitle himself to Light in an especial manner.

(*Mat. 5. 44.*) *He causeth his Sun to shine, &c.* The Moon

is his as well as the Sun, and the Stars are his as much as either ; but because the Sun is the greater Vessel and conveyer of Light, therefore saith Christ, *He causeth his Sun to shine on the evil and the good, &c.* God himself is *Light*, and the *Father of Lights* (*Jam. 1. 17.*) which is true not only of spiritual Light, by which the things of God are discovered to us ; but also of natural Light, the light of the Sun, that's Gods Light too, he is the Father of it.

Secondly note ;

The changes which we see in the air, from fair to foul weather, from calms to tempests, are from God.

It is not in the creature to make one day or hour fair or foul. As Christ gives the reason why no man should swear by his head, because he cannot *make an hair white or black*, he cannot change the colour of an hair, nor make a hair of any colour : So, it is not in the power of any man, to make one day fair or foul, that's Gods peculiar ; *He spreadeth his Light upon the Clouds, and covereth the bottom of the Sea.*

Vers. 31. *For by them he judgeth the People, he giveth meat in abundance.*

This 31th Verse gives us the effect of all that which *Elihu* had spoken before, of the rain, of storms and tempests, and we may add, of lightening, and of thunder ; *By them he judgeth the people and giveth meat in abundance.* Here are two effects ; First, an effect grievous ; Secondly, an effect gracious : The former proceeds from the justice, the latter from the mercy and goodness of God.

By them, that is, by the rain, by the winds, &c. *he judgeth the people.*

To judge is taken three wayes in Scripture.

First, To judge, is to rule or govern. When it is said, such a man judged *Israel*, the meaning is, he ruled and governed *Israel*: That's the language of the book of *Judges* every where, when their Governours are spoken of.

Secondly, To *judge*, is to determine, or give sentence in a special case (*Deut. 25. 1.*)

Thirdly, To judge is to punish or afflict, and thus often in Scrip-

ture, when God punisheth any person or people, he is said to judge them (*Psal. 51. 4.*) *That thou mayest be cleared when thou judgest*, that is, when thou afflictest, or layest thine hand upon me (saith *David*) as God had threatened by *Nathan*, that the sword should not depart from his house; this moved *David* to make confession, *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned: — that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and cleared when thou judgest.* As if he had said, my confession, O Lord, will be thy justification; all may see I have given thee abundant cause to lay thy chastening hand upon me (*Heb. 13. 4.*) *Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge*; though men let them pass, yet God will not, he will punish them. Again, in that notable place (*1 Cor. 11. 31, 32.*) *If we would judge our selves we should not be judged of the Lord.* What it is to be judged, the Apostle sheweth in the next words; *But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord.* The Apostle wains the Church to take heed how they came to the solemn assemblies, lest coming rashly and unpreparedly, the hand of God should fall heavy upon them, by weakness, sickness and death. When *Elihu* saith, *By them he judgeth the People.* We are to take judging in this third sence; *He judgeth*, that is, he afflicteth and punisheth men by these things. Thus the Allusion is elegantly followed. The Lord from his tabernacle, or throne in the Clouds, sends forth Edicts, and signes his Warrants, for the punishment both of nations and persons; windy stormes, rain and thunder, going forth as executioners of his orders and appointments: *By them he judgeth the people.*

Hence observe;

First, *God can make a scourge of any of the creatures.*

By them, that is, by the rain and by the wind, *he judgeth the people.* He can use what instrument he pleaseth to afflict and chasten us with. Read the holy Scriptures, read the Histories of the Church, and you will find all sorts of creatures summoned one time or other, and sent forth as Gods messengers, to punish the pride and stubbornness, the impenitency and perverseness of mens hearts and wayes. How many creatures did God make use of to punish *Pharaoh* with, and many of them very contemptible ones; among the rest, the hail, rain, and thunder spoken of in this place, were his instruments of vengeance in plaguing that hardened

ned King. Whensoever God afflicts a people by the creatures, he judgeth them by the creatures. *Let us take heed, that we provoke not God to turn those things which were given for our good, to our hurt; that he make not what was made our servant, our punishment.* God made all creatures serviceable and useful to man, but through sin they become grievous and destructive to man; *By them he judgeth the people.*

He giveth meat in abundance.

Escaam od copiam. Heb. i. e. copiosum.

Here is the second effect wrought or produced by these creatures: *He giveth*, that is, God giveth; *meat*, that is, all kind of food and provision, for the life both of man and beast; and he giveth it *in abundance*: He doth not give it scantily or niggardly, in small portions and pittance, but in full measure, pressed down, heaped up, and running over. *By them*, that is, by the rain and by the wind, &c. God gives us our meat in abundance. One translation saith, *He giveth meat to many*, that is, to all.

Dat escaam multis mortalibus. Hieron.

Hence note;

First, *Our daily food is the gift of God.*

He giveth meat. No man gets his own bread unless God giveth it: God must give it before we can get it.

Secondly note;

God is a free, bountiful and liberal house-keeper;

He giveth meat in abundance; he giveth to very many, yea, to all, and he giveth very much; he giveth meat to all the fowles of the Air, and to all the fishes of the Sea, to all men and beasts living on the earth, they all receive food from God; he giveth food to all flesh (*Psal. 136. 25.*) *He filleth every living thing.* (*Psal. 147. 9.*) *He giveth to the beast his food, and feedeth the young ravens when they cry.* *Christ makes this an argument of faith in God for food and cloathing* (*Mat. 6. 26.*) *Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather in to barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them: are not ye much better than they?* How little faith have you, who knowing that God feeds the fowls of the air, yet cannot trust him for your food! *He giveth food in abundance.*

Thirdly,

Thirdly note ;

Plenty and scarcity are at the dispose of God;

He can give meat in scarcity, as well as meat in abundance ; he can give cleanness of teeth as well as fulness of bread : And as he can strengthen the staff of bread, so break it, and *cause us to eat bread by weight and with care, and to drink water by measure and with astonishment* (Ezek. 4. 16.) To eat by weight and drink by measure, is to eat and drink in the want of bread and water, as is expresed (vers. 17.) And as these changes of our natural, so of our spiritual food are from the Lord (*Amos 8. 11.*) *I will send a famine* (What famine ?) *not of bread, but of hearing the word of the Lord.* 'Tis the Lord who lends plenty and scarcity of bread, whether for the soul or for the body.

Fourthly, In that he saith, by them he giveth meat in abundance,

Note ;

God useth natural meakes as the cause either of plenty or scarcity.

The Lord could give us abundance, if he pleased, without rain, but he rarely gives abundance but by rain ; he sends rain out of the Clouds to water the earth, and make it fruitful. The Lord could make our souls fruitful in every good work, without the preaching of the word, but he seldom doth it (I believe never when the word may be had) without the preaching of the word. And therefore the Lord by his Prophet makes a comparison between, or a paralel of these two (*Isa. 55. 10, 11.*) *As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater ; so shall my word be, that goeth out of my mouth, &c.* The Lord useth rain and snow, yea, wind and thunder, to fit the earth, as he useth his Word and holy Ordinances to fit the soul, to bring forth fruit to himself. He could do both alone, but he improveth that order of nature and grace which himself at first set up and instituted to bring about these excellent ends. *By them he giveth meat in abundance.*

The Greek translation renders *all manner of muchness*. From the whole learn, what cause we have to acknowledge the goodness

αὐτῶν, ὅσο-
ντιν πρὸς
πολλῶν.

Præbit escam
per multam.
Sept.

nels of God in every shower of rain, and fleet of snow; for by them he giveth us our mear.

We should hence also be minded to fear the Lord, and to take heed of his displeasure. It is said (*Acts 12. 20.*) when *Herod* was highly displeased with them of *Tire and Sidon*, they came with one accord to him; and having made *Blastus* the Kings Chamberlain their friend, desired peace, because their Country was nourished by the Kings Country. O how much more should we labour to avoid the displeasure of God, and hasten to make our peace with him, seeing our Country is nourished by his Country! The heavens nourish the earth, else the earth could not afford any thing for our nourishment. We are fed rather from the heavens than from the earth. The clouds drop down and make the earth fat, to give grass for cattel and corn for man. *Elihu* speaks nothing of the Earth, but of the Clouds, from them we are fed.

Lastly consider, *Elihu* joynes both effects expressly, *By them he judgeth the people, he giveth meat, &c.*

Hence note;
The Lord can make the same creature either beneficial or hurtful to us.

That which is an instrument in his hand for good to his servants, is often a plague and a scourge to his enemies. The rain which at one time moistens the earth, at another time drowns it; the rain which at one time cherisheth the creatures, at another time choaks them. The winds which at one time fan the air and cool it, at another time enrage and vex it; the winds which at one time sweeten and cleanse the air, at another time corrupt and infect it. The Lord can with the same creatures, furnish himself for any dispensation: *By them he judgeth the people, and by them he giveth meat in abundance.*

J O B, Chap. 36. Vers. 32, 33.

32. *With clouds he covereth the light, and commandeth it not to shine, by the cloud that cometh between.*

33. *The noise whereof sheweth concerning it, the cattel also concerning the vapour.*

Hujus et sequenti versum difficultas et obscuritas tanta semper ab omnibus enarratoribus habitata est ut vix alius in toto hoc libro, ne dicam in toto sacro codice locus isto impenetrabilior esse videatur. Bold:

These two verses have a Character of difficulty and obscurity put upon them by several interpreters; and some have concluded them the most difficult and darkest portion of the whole Book of *Job*, yea, of the whole Book of God. And should I reckon up all the various Grammatical constructions of these words, together with the distinct interpretations given upon them, I should weary my self, and rather perplex than advantage the Reader.

And therefore I shall speak to these two verses, First, as they are laid down plainly in our translation, according to which (with submission to the judgement of those learned Authors) I see neither any great difficulty nor obscurity in them, and shall afterwards give a brief account at least, of some of those different readings and translations which I find upon them.

The words (as I conceive) according to the mind of our translators, and as the Text clearly beareth, hold out two things concerning the raine, of which *Elihu* had spoken before.

First, What is naturally preparatory to raine or foule weather, that we have in the 32d verse, *With clouds he covereth the light, and commandeth it not to shine by the Cloud that cometh between.*

Secondly, We have that which is declaratory of raine, or (as some call them) *the Prognosticks* and signs of raine; these are laid down in the 33d verse, *The noise thereof sheweth concerning it, the Cattel also concerning the vapour.*

Vers. 32. *With clouds he covereth the light.*

He, that is, God covereth the light with Clouds. We heard of the Clouds at the 29th verse, but the word there used is not that

that which is used in this 32d verse. The word here made use of by *Elhu*, signifies generally any thing that is *hollow* or *concave*, as a spoon, platter, or bowl, or such like utensils; which are bowed with a convex and concave superficies; it hath also particularly two eminent significations, both of which are made use of in this place by Interpreters. First, it signifieth the *hand*; so we translate it (*Job 16. 17.*) *There is no injustice in my hand.* The word which here we translate a *Cloud*, is there translated, a *hand*: Now, the hand, we know, hath a hollownes or cavity in it, unless when it is purposely held forth plaine. The second signification is that of the Text, a *Cloud*, which is also hollow, and (as most conclude) the same word is put to signifie a *hand*, and a *Cloud*, because *Clouds* usually at the first appearance are but small, or like a hand, as *Elijahs* servant reported to him, after his seventh going to view the Heavens (*1 Kings 18. 44.*) *Behold, a little Cloud like a mans hand.* In this sence we take it here in our translation: Some render *With his hand he covereth the light*, we say, *With Clouds*

Vox עָבָה
antiquus est, ad
manum & nu-
ber, proprio
vobis denotat;
ad nubes refero
quia de iis ha-
bitura altum,
et quia proprie
curvaturus sig-
nificat, quales
in unaquaq;
nubes duæ sunt,
convexa &
concava. De
Dieu, in loc.

He covereth the light.

He covereth or hideth the light, that is, from our eyes, he causeth it to disappear, or not to appear to us: The word notes covering as with a garment, or covering with any thing that intercepts and stops the sight; and hence by a Trop: it is applyed to the pardon of sin (*Psal. 32. 1.*) *Blessed is the man whose sin is covered.* When the Lord pardons sin, he is said to cover it, because he will not suffer it to appear against the sinner, nor be charged upon him to condemnation. As pardon covers sins, so *Clouds* cover the Heavens, and when they are covered the light is covered. *With Clouds he covereth the light.* The Prophet *Jeremy* in his *Lamentations* (*Chap. 3. 44.*) complained sadly, because God (who is light) had covered himself, *Thou hast covered thy self with a Cloud, that our prayers should not pass through.* As God doth sometimes cover himself, or hide the light of his Countenance from his people, as with a cloud, that their prayers cannot pass through; so he often hides or covers the light of the aire with natural or proper *Clouds*, that the Sun-beams for a time cannot pierce nor pass through; *With Clouds he covereth*

עָבָה Text;
abscondi, im-
ponendo ali-
quid quo tegas
tanquam oper-
culo vel veste.

H F h

The

The light.

¶ *lum lu-
com, tum solem,
a quo lux, vel
quia est fons
lucis, significat.*

The word used by *Elihu*, signifies both *light* and the *Sun*, which is the fountain, from whence *light* flows and issues; yea, the word signifies also *fire*. The *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*, are called (*ignes*) the *fires of heaven*, because like so many fires or mighty torches they give light to us on earth. And by a metaphor the word signifies *Joy*, *Comfort*, all sorts of good things; as on the other side, by darkness, troubles and calamities of all sorts are metaphorically exprest in Scripture. *With Clouds he covereth the light,*

And commandeth it not to shine by the Cloud that cometh between.

As if he had said, When a Cloud covereth the light, 'tis the command of God which puts the Cloud as a covering upon it. Those words [*not to shine*] are not expressly in the Hebrew Text; there it is only thus; *With Clouds he covereth the light, and commandeth it by that which cometh between*: nor is the word *Cloud* exprest in the latter part of the verse, we put it in as a supplement in another Character, more fully to exprest the sence of the Text.

And commandeth it not to shine.

¶ *Verbum TMS
quod significat
præcipere,
quum regit
præpositionem
TV significat
inardicere.
Pisc.*

The word which we translate *to command*, properly signifies, to bid or command a thing to be done; but when it stands in construction, as here, with *Oral*, it signifieth to forbid or stay a thing that it be not done. (*Gen. 2. 16.*) *God commanded the man, or concerning the man, &c.* As that command expressed a liberty to eat of every other tree in the Garden, so it included a prohibition of eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge, which is also exprest at the 17th verse. We have a like construction of the word (*Gen. 28. 6. 1 Kings 2. 43.*) *He commandeth it not to shine*

By the Cloud that cometh between.

¶ *VID occurrit
inuit aggres-
sus est, ex Mo-
nophorum in-
tercessit or-*

By that which cometh between, or by that which meets it, that is, as we supply it, by the thick and dark Cloud which meets and intercepts the bright beames of the Sun. The root of the word signifies to meet with force (not only *occurrere* but *irruere*)

to ruſh upon, to invade, to aſſault, or to charge, as an enemy is charged in battel; and it ſignifies, by a Metaphor, to intercede, to make prayer or ſupplication for another, which is as it were a coming between man and man. An Interceſſor cometh between two parties, the party offending, and the party offended, he interpoſeth himſelf to make up the breach, or to take up the difference, that if poſſible a reconciliation may be made. The Latine word which we tranſlate Latinely to *intercede*, is of the ſame ſignificancy; and this Hebrew word is often ſo rendred (*Jer. 7. 16.*) *Pray not for this people, nor make interceſſion to me*; that is, thou ſhalt not come between me and this people to ſtop or ſtay me, that I break not out into wrath, or from pouring out my wrath upon them. In other Scriptures it is uſed to note an act of interceſſion between man and man (*Gen. 23. 8.*) as alſo an act of addreſs by prayer and intreaty, whether towards God or man, (*Job 21. 15. Ruth 1. 16.*) And becauſe the word properly notes meeting another with a kind of violence, it intimates with what a holy violence, with what ſtrength, earneſtneſs, and fervency of ſpirit, we ought to meet God, either in prayer for our ſelves, or when we come as interceſſors, and ſtand before him in the behalf of others, whether Perſons, Nations, or Churches.

Many Interpreters (as I ſhall ſhew afterward) take the word in this ſence here for an Interceſſor, or for a perſon that prayeth and intercedeth for another. We, in our tranſlation, expound it of a thing, and that thing of a Cloud that interpoſeth or cometh between us and the Light. He commandeth the light not to ſhine, *by the Cloud that cometh between, or, by the Cloud that paſſeth between us and the light of the Sun.*

Hence note;

Fiſt, *The beſt and ſweeteſt mercies we have in this world, may quickly meet with a ſtop.*

When we have the Light, a Cloud may ſoon come between the Light and us: Which as it is true of the natural Light and Clouds, ſo of that which is Light in a figure, our moſt comfortable enjoyments; and that which is a Cloud in a figure, troubleſome and afflictive Providences. There is no light, of what kind ſoever it is, but there may be a Cloud to intercept it, and come between us and that; even the light of the favour of God, the light of

H h h 2

his

currit depre-
condi cau a.
Hinc וְיִשְׁכַּח
per occurrentes,
ſci per occurre-
ren. en mibem,
qua intercedi-
ente. Hinc ſo-
lus regit. Drui
Merci

his countenance, which is the most blessed light of all, even that light hath many a Cloud. The clouds of our sins cause the Lord to cloud his face with anger and displeasure, and hinder the light of his favour and loving-kindness from shining upon our souls.

Secondly, In that *Elibu* saith, *He commandeth it not to shine,*

Note;

The Lord hath a sovereign power over all creatures;

He sends forth his commanding word, not only to Angels and Men, but to Beasts, yea, to inanimates, he sends out his orders and edicts to the Clouds of the Air; to the Light of the Sun, to things without life, and they submit presently and obey; he speaketh to the light as if it were a reasonable creature, he commandeth it not to shine, and it shineth not. The hosts of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth are at the dispose of God; the whole course of nature moves and stands still at his word and pleasure. The Sun stood still in the dayes of *Joshua* at his command; and by the same command, the Sun went backward in the dayes of *Hzekiah*; and 'tis by his command that the Sun withdraws its light, and is muffled up with Clouds at any time. *He commandeth it not to shine.*

Take these Inferences from it.

First, *Then, what cannot God do?* He that commands the light not to shine, and it shineth not; Is any thing too hard for him? who but God can stop the Sun from shining? If all the Princes and Potentates of this world should joyn their forces, their counsels together, and send a prohibition to the Sun, to stay its light, and forbear its shining one moment, they were not able to do it; yet if the Lord do but speak the word, the Sun shineth not; he can give it a prohibition, and supersede the going forth of its light to us: yea, he hath power enough, not only to cover the Sun with Clouds, but to turn it into a Cloud, and to blot it out of the heavens.

Secondly, learn hence, *In what dependance we are upon God for every thing.* God can keep the light from us every day if he pleaseth, and wrap us up in perpetual darkness, as he plagued the Land of *Egypt* with thick darkness for three dayes together. 'Tis true, the Sun riseth and goeth down in a natural course, yet still by

by a divine order and commission. As God can forbid the Light by interposing Clouds, so he can forbid the Clouds to give us showers, and bind up all the sweet influences of heaven from destilling upon the earth to make it fruitful. He can speak to our garments that they warm us not, to our food that it nourish us not, to our physick that it cure and heal us not, to all our relations that they comfort us not, to all our possessions and riches that they content us not. **O let us remember that we depend upon God for Rain, for Light, for Sun-shine, for all; it is at his word that they all put themselves forth to do us good, and at his word they are all staid and stopt in their motion, from doing or bringing us any good.**

Let us remember also God can command another light not to shine; he can by a word stop the progress of the Word, and stay that blessed and most beautiful light, the light of the Gospel, from shining to us, by some Cloud or other coming between. To how many nations of people, where that light sometimes shined, hath God long since sent a command, and it shineth not! It shined brightly in former Ages upon the *African* Churches, but now, for a long time, God hath said to the light of the Gospel, shine not upon them; there's scarce any light at all, at most but a glimmering of Gospel-Light in all that vast continent, a quarter-part of the world. What mighty Dominions are now possessed by the followers of *Mahomet*, both in *Europe* and *Asia*, where the light of the Gospel did once shine very brightly and gloriously! How famous were those seven *Asian* Churches, men ioned and writ to by the command of Christ, and the ministry of his servant and Secretary *John* (*Rev.* 1. 2, 3.) yet now darkness possesseth all those places, and the *Alcoran* hath thrust out the Gospel; and whence is all this? Surely God commanded, and that light shined not, nor hath it shined with any brightness for many hundred years. Jesus Christ, who threatened *Ephesus* with the removal of her Candlestick, hath removed all those Candlesticks, and put out their lights. The same stop can God give to the Gospel-light which hath shined among us (blessed be his Name) for many years together: Let us take heed that we forfeit not that blessed light, that we provoke not the Lord by our abuse of it and unthankfulness for it, to send out a command, that it shine not among us any more. We read in the Prophets how divine light

was prohibited both to the People and to the Prophets: The stop of it to the People, we have (*Amos 8.9.*) *I will cause the Sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day.* The Prophet speaks not here at all of the stop of natural light, nor doth he only intend the stop of that metaphorical light, Prosperity in outward things, which the Lord doth often eclipse and darken, when men dream least of it, or have no more fear about it, than they have that the Sun will go down at noon day; but he, at least, intends, if it be not his principal intendment, to shew that a grievous judgment was hastning upon them, as to their spiritual enjoyments; that the light of divine knowledge, what to believe, and what to practise, was declining, and ready to go down, though they thought it was but noon with them, and the day very clear. For as the famine threatned (*vers. 11.*) is expounded upon the place, by the Prophet himself, not to be a famine of bread, and a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord; so the darkness threatened in this 9th verse, is not to be restrained to the loss of their worldly liberties and comforts, but extended to those which were spiritual and divine, the failing of vision, and the removing of the light of the Word. And as in this Prophet we find the light departing from the People, so in the third of *Micah* (*vers. 6, 7.*) we find God commanding the light not to shine to the Prophets. (the false prophets he meaneth there, for so he describeth them, *vers. 5.*) *Therefore shall night be unto you* (the prophets who deceive my people, who teach them vanity, and lead them to Idolatry and superstition; therefore, I say, *shall night be unto you*) *that ye shall have no vision, and it shall be dark to you that you shall not divine, and the Sun shall go down over the Prophets, and the day shall be dark over them.* What the Lord means by all this, you have exprest in the close of the 7th verse, *There is no answer of God,* that is, God doth not now any more manifest his mind and will by the Prophets, that they might manifest his will unto the People. I close this point with the renewal of my former admonition; Let us therefore take heed we provoke not the Lord to command this light not to shine, either to Prophets or People, in our Horizon.

Thirdly, *He commandeth it not to shine by the Cloud that cometh between.* Though (as I said) the word *Cloud*, be not exprest in the text, yet we know 'tis a Cloud that usually cometh between the light and us.

Hence

Hence note ;

Though God can do all things by his bare word, yet he ordinarily useth means to bring about his purposes, whether for good or evil, whether in mercy or in judgement, to the children of men.

There is something comes between. God hath a Cloud, or somewhat like it, to put between us and the light. The Apostle (2 Thes. 2. 6, 7.) treating of Antichrist, the man of sin, intimates, that he would have filled the world with the darkness of error and superstition very quickly, by a full discovery of himself, had not something with-held him, had not something come between him and his design for a time. What was that ? 'Tis generally conceived, that which did with-hold or come between the man of sin, and his purpose of filling the world with the darkness of his wicked errors and abominable worship, was the power of the Roman Empire at that time ; Antichrist could not put forth his power while that power stood in its strength. God could have with-held Antichrist immediately from putting forth of himself, but he saw it best to put a block in his way, the power of the Roman Empire, and until that was thrust out of the way, the man of sin could never shew himself fully, in that unlimited exercise of his sinful power. Now, I say, as there was then a with-holder of Antichristian darkness, somewhat that came between and hindered its effectual working ; so usually, I may say universally, somewhat comes between to check and stop the course of the Gospel-light, or of any other mercy. Sin is a Cloud of our making, and God in judgement makes that as a Cloud coming between us and our mercies. He did so of old to Israel, and he told them so by his Prophet (Jer. 5. 25.) *Your sins have with-holden good things from you.* Sin with-holds good things, not formally, but meretorionally, that is, sin is the meriting or deserving cause of their with-holding. This one Cloud of our sins, brings all the Clouds of trouble between us and our mercies ; and the Lord hath alwayes some Cloud or other of trouble at hand, in readines to cover the light, that it shine not to us, when we trouble and grieve him by those foggy and filthy clouds of our sins. Thus far of that which is preparatory to rain, Clouds covering the light. It followeth,

Vers.

Hic versu diffi-
cillimus est si-
quā in toto Jo-
bo, in quo quot
sunt expasiores
tot fere sonus
afferuntur.

Merc.

וַיִּשְׁרָא
וַיִּשְׁרָא עֵינָיו
quidam dedu-
cunt a וַיִּרְא
sonavit, clama-
vit, vocifera-
tus est, alii a
וַיִּשְׁרָא
amicus, socius.

Vers. 33. *The noise thereof sheweth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapour.*

This Verse, according to our translation, as I touched before, carrieth on the same thing. There we had the preparation as it were, for rain, Clouds gathered and covering the Sun, so making dark weather: Now, saith he, that the rain is coming, *the noise thereof sheweth concerning it.* The word which we render *noise*, taken from one root signifieth any troublesome clamour; and as derived from another root, it signifieth a friend or companion (as I shall touch afterward) But at present leaving that, I shall open it according to our own reading, as it signifieth a *noise*. Some read *his noise*, that is, Gods noise, he maketh a noise in the air: And this noise of God in the air, is either, first, the noise of the wind; winds often fore-run great raines; or secondly, the noise of thunderclaps, that rattling noise heard from the clouds, which come between us and the light; this noise *sheweth concerning it*, that is, this sheweth foul weather is coming, or that rain (as we speak) is brewing in the Clouds. Both the blustering winds and the rattling roaring thunder tell us afore-hand, and give warning, that the weather will suddenly change, or that rain is at hand.

Hence Note;

God by natural signs gives warning of a change in natural things.

When God is about to send rain, the noise that is in the Clouds tells the world that 'tis coming. Some are very skilful in observing these things; such we call, *weatherwise*. From this I would only infer, If God doth fore-shew or give signs of the change that he makes in natural things, then surely he doth much more give his people warning of the changes he is about to make in civil things, in the States and Kingdomes of this world. There are some things which do, as it were, predict or fore-shew such and such changes neer, if we were wise to observe them. The *Jewes* were very inquisitive to know of Christ the signs of the times; These signs they enquired of him, not so much out of curiosity (which had been bad enough) as out of treachery, to intrap him in his words, yet mark what Christ said to them (*Math. 16. 1, 2, 3.*) *He answered and said unto them, when it is evening, ye say it will be fair weather, for the skie is red* (a red

(a red ſkie ſhewes concerning fair weather) and in the morning it will be foul weather, for the ſkie is red and lowring. When the ſkie lowres, or, as here in *Job*, when the Cloud cometh between us and the light, that tells us it will be foul weather. Now, ſaith Chriſt, do you think that God hath given us ſuch warnings about changes in natural things, and hath he not given ſigns which may fore-ſhew changes in other things, which more concerns us ? Therefore Chriſt checks them in the 3d verſe, *O ye hypocrites, ye can diſcern the face of the ſkie, and can ye not diſcern the Signs of the times*, that is, what changes God will make in the times ? As if he had ſaid, if you were wiſe ye might diſcern the ſigns of ruine approaching to you and your City. A dreadful black Cloud of deſtruction hung over the City of *Jeruſalem* at that time, as Chriſt had fore-told them in ſeveral places of the Goſpel : the time is coming (ſaith he) when *there ſhall not be left one ſtone upon another*; yet you cannot ſee the ſigns of theſe things ; you are very ſkilful to diſcern a fair day & a foul day (there are natural prognosicks of theſe things) but ye hypocrites cannot diſcern the ſigns of the times : Do ye not think God hath given you warning, hath he not fore-ſhewed what he will do with you and with this City ? if ye were wiſe ye might underſtand that ſhortly it will be overthrown, and ſo it was by *Titus Veſpatian* not long after. God gives as clear ſigns of the changes that ſhall be in times, as he doth concerning the change of the weather: And that's one thing which doth very much fore-ſhew it, when God puts it into the hearts of his Miniſters unanimouſly to fore-warn approaching troubles. Such warnings were given to *Hiernſalem*, not only by Chriſt, but afterward by others. *Joſephus* in his Hiſtory reports of one that could not by any puniſhment be ſtopt from crying up and down the City, for ſeveral years, after this manner, *A voyce from the eaſt, a voyce from the weſt, a voyce from the four windes, a voyce againſt Jeruſalem, and a voyce againſt the Temple*. There was alſo (as the ſame Author reports) a voyce heard in the Temple, *Let us depart hence*. The Jewes generally would not believe theſe voyces, but went on and were angry when any told them of a Cloud coming over their day, yet they found them all verified in the ſubverſion of their city, by the *Romans*. Such fore-warnings were given the *Palatinate*, and other parts of *Germany*, before thoſe great evils came upon them. Some way or other God

Joſephus, lib. 7. c. 12. de Bello Judaico.

hath alwayes shewed when these showres were coming; and when a people grow weary of their warnings, when they grow more prophane and wicked under them, this is a sure sign, a fatal prognostick, that God is coming with a showre of wrath, and is ready to pour down a storm of vengeance upon them. And surely these warnings, both with respect to natural changes in the Air, and civil changes in the affairs of this World, argue the wonderful goodness of God, that he would have us prepare for all dispensations: He will not send a showre of rain, but would have us prepared for it; and when he is about to send those great showres of Judgment upon the world, he would have his people ready and prepared, and therefore by some means or other he tells them before hand what is at hand.

מקנה
Pecus.

Thus, the noyse thereof sheweth concerning it, or telleth us the storm is coming. But is there nothing else that fore-tells this? Yes, it followeth,

The cattel also concerning the vapour.

על-עולה

The very beast of the field give notice of the vapour. The Hebrew is *that which goeth up*, so we read in the margin. The rain comes down, and the vapours go up; and the going up of the vapour is an argument of the coming down of the rain. As the noyse or thunder in the Clouds fore-sheweth a storm, so *the cattel concerning the vapour*, they tell us the rain is coming down by their apprehension of the vapour which goeth up.

Some render, not vapour, but plants or herbs, trees or grass, these go up or ascend out of the earth, as well as vapours. Our translation is plain. *The cattel also*, the very sheep and oxen, yea the fowles of the air will tell when we shall have foul weather; before such stormes come usually they run to shelter, hiding and shifting for themselves as well as they can, against the storm. *Cattel presage rain.* Pliny in his Natural History speaks much of the natural sagacity that is in beasts, swine, sheep and oxen, whereby they perceive change of weather. The Poet Virgil also verifies largely and accurately of these things; reporting how husbandmen that keep cattel will gather by what they see in the cattel what the weather will be. *The cattel also concerning the vapour.*

Plinius, lib.
18. c. 35. *Natural History.*
Virgilius, in
Georg. 1. 1.

Hence

Hence Note ;

Bruit Creatures, by a natural inſtinct, perceive the approaching changes of the weather.

And why hath God given them that natural inſtinct ? Why are they quick-ſented and quick-ſighted, yea many times more quick-ſighted than men are ? Surely, it is firſt, that thoſe poor Creatures may provide themſelves of ſhelter, and not be abroad in the ſtorm, rain or wind, in a time of danger, or inconvenient to them. This may be of uſe to us. God would teach us by the very dumb Creatures, the Bruits, what our duty is ; the Cattel, the Swine, the Sheep will witneſs againſt us, if we do not take notice of, nor obſerve, the ſigns of the various diſpenſations of God, or when he is about to vary his diſpenſations. Can the Cattel tell when it will be ſowly weather, and are men ſo ſtupid (are they eſpecially that profeſs the Goſpel ſo ſtupid) that they underſtand none of theſe things ? The Prophet *Jeremiah* (*Chap. 8. 7.*) reproves the people of *Iſrael* upon this account, by the fowles of heaven (as was ſhewed upon another occaſion, at the 11th Verſe of the 35th Chapter) *The Stork in the heavens knoweth his appointed time, and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow know the times of their coming ;* that is, they will not ſtay in any place, where it is not fit nor ſafe for them to ſtay, and they will not come to any place till they know all things are ſuitable and ready for them : *But my people knoweth not the judgment of their God,* they are more ſenſeleſs than the very fowls of heaven in this. And therefore the prophet checks them (*v. 8.*) *How do ye ſay, we are wiſe, and the Law of the Lord is with us ?* You count yourſelves very wiſe, yet ye are not ſo wiſe in this matter as the Stork and the Crane, and the Swallow, for they obſerve their times, but you do not. It is a great part of our wiſdom to ſee what God is doing, or what he is about to do before he doth it. It is ſaid (*Prov. 22. 3.*) *A prudent man foreſeeeth an evil.* When evil is come every one can ſee it (though ſome will ſcarce ſee it then, as the Prophet complained (*Iſa. 26. 11.*) *When thy hand is lifted up, they will not ſee it*) but uſually that which is done or doing we can ſee ; when we feel an evil we can ſee it ; but the prudent, that is the godly man, fore-ſeeeth the evil. How comes he to fore-ſee it ? not by any helliſh divination, nor by ſtar-gazing, nor by asking the Devil what ſhall be hereafter, as *Saul* did ; he would fore-ſee the evil,

Iii 2. but

but he went to the Devil, to a Witch for it (*1 Sam. 28.*) Now a godly man doth not fore-see the evil by any such wayes or means, but by a diligent collection of things, comparing one with the other, or by the connection of causes with their effects, and of antecedents with their consequents; by these he plainly fore-seeth that such or such an evil is coming, even as the beast fore-sees the storm is coming by the vapour, or that which goeth up. The prudent man fore-seeth an evil approaching by way of argument. For thus he reasons, if God be an unchangeable God, if he be as holy, as just, as powerful, as zealous, as jealous now, as ever he was, and if sin be the same as ever it was, if sin be as fowl in it self, if it be as loathsome and as burthensome to God, if it be as pernicious and hurtful to man now, as ever it was, then surely when men run such and such sinful courses, such and such will be the effects, such and such the fruits. Thus a prudent man seeth the effect in the cause, the consequent in the antecedent. This was *Solomon's* purpose, when he said (*Eccles. 2. 14.*) *The wise mans eyes are in his head.* You may say, so are the fools eyes too; Where are his eyes else? But when *Solomon* saith, *The wise mans eyes are in his head*, his meaning is, they are there to purpose; the wise man well observes and marks how things go, and whither things tend, he considers how things go, and whither things are going; *but the fool walketh in darkness*, that is, he walketh as if he had no eyes in his head, as if his eyes were in his heels, not in his head. It is said, (*1 Chron. 12. 32.*) concerning the men of *Issachar*, *They were wise concerning the times, and to know what Israel ought to do*: They knew what the times required, and what God required in those times, what special duties were incumbent upon them, from the dispensations of God. It is a great mercy, and a great part of our wisdom to be thus wise, and if we are not, we shall be found and judged more brutish than the brut beast, for the Cattel also give warning concerning the vapour, they give notice when rain and storms are coming.

Thus I have held out the sence of the words, as they are laid down plainly in our translation.

But there are very many differences among Interpreters (as was hinted before) in the reading and rendring of these words; all which arise from some difficulty in the Grammatical construction and copious signification of the Hebrew text. I might give you

you more than three and three several interpretations of these words, but, as I said before, I should rather perplex the Reader than confirm him; yet I shall name three, when I have only shewed which words in the text occasion this variety in translation. First, the word rendred by us *Clouds*, signifieth also *the hands*. Secondly, the word rendred *cometh between*, signifieth an *Intercessor*, or *one that prayeth*, as also an *opposer*, who stands up against and resists the force of another. Thirdly, the word rendred *noise* signifieth (when derived from another root) a friend or familiar. Fourthly, the word rendred *cattel*, signifieth also *possession*, or that which is possessed, and taken from another root, *emulation* or *strife*. Fifthly, the word which we translate as an Adverbe, *also*, signifieth likewise *anger*. Sixthly, the word rendred *vapour*, signifieth an *ascension*, or going up; and so *plants* or *herbs*, which grow out of the ground and ascend into the air according to their growth, are elegantly expressed by it.

All these differences found in the single tearms, are made use of by Interpreters, as will appear while I give you a taste of three different translations.

First, The common Latine translator renders thus, *In his hands he hideth the Light, and commands it to come again; he speaks of it, or declares it to his friend, that it is his possession, and that he may ascend or come to it.* This rendring is marvelous different from ours, yet there is some footing for it in the Original, and it may receive a useful sense.

The whole text being accordingly expounded as an argument of Gods great favour to godly men; from whom, though he at any time hideth the light, yet, tis but for a time, he commands it to return again, and tells them as his friends, light is their possession, and that at last they shall ascend up into light.

There is a second Classis of Interpreters, who expound these two Verses wholly as a description of the Clouds meeting together and assailing one another, like two great Champions and Warriors in battel. The learned *Beza* translates the first part of the 32d Verse conformably to the Vulgar Latine last spoken of, *He hideth the light in either hand, or both hands*; and the latter part of that Verse, together with the whole 33d Verse, in conformity to the sense now given; *He gives it (namely the light or Lightening) command concerning that which meets or comes against*

*In ungue vol-
ocuiat tuam,
Et præcipit ei
super occurren-
te.
Judicat hoc
tumultus ejus
emulatio Et
ira adversus
ascendentem.
Bez.*

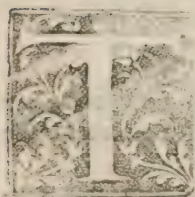
it (namely where and how to receive the force or charge of the other cloud that is ready to assault it) *the noise, the strife, the anger of it against the ascender* (or cloud coming up) *plainly declareth this.* Some of the Jewish Doctors insist much in the description of this conflict between the Clouds above, and the ascending Clouds, concerning which the reader may consult them for further information; but the difficulties of this translation noted by Modern Expositors, especially by *Mercer* and *Merlin*, are so many that it may suffice to name it.

Thirdly, Mr. *Broughton*, thus, *By hands he covereth the light, and chargeth it as man doth pray, declaring his favour towards him, the cattel and also plants.* The meaning is (which several others follow in translating and opening this context). That when God covereth the light or causeth darkness, yet at the intercession or prayer of his people he makes a change and causeth great serenity, giving comfortable times, & thereby declaring his favour towards them, yea, and towards the cattel and the plants, which feed upon ascend or grow up out of the earth. *Junius* consents fully with this sense, whose Translation and gloss upon it I shall present the reader, and submit all to his judgment and consideration; *With his hands he hideth the light* (that is, he makes it dark as laying his hand upon it) *and he forbids it* (namely his hand to hide the light any longer) *because of him that intercedeth* (that is, *Noah* in the time of the general flood, and the Godly, who according to the example of *Nah* come to God, *Jam. 5. 16.*) *declaring towards him* (that is, the Godly man praying and worshiping God) *his good will, yea, towards the cattel and fruits of the earth.*

These are the most eminent conceptions which I find upon the text; all of them containing truths, and such as may occasion useful meditations. But I rather adhere to our own version, in which, as the power of God in changing the weather is held out, so his goodness in giving signs and warnings of it, both by the noises which we hear in the air, and by some unusual actions and motions, which we may see among Cattel here upon the earth.

J O B, Chap. 37. Vers. 1, 2.

1. *At this also my heart trembled, and it moved out of its place.*
2. *Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth.*



His Chapter concludes the Conference of *Elihu* with *Job*, and it consists of three parts.

First, In it we have an enumeration, together with a description of divers Meteors, or wonderful works of God in the Air, Thunder and Lightning, Snow and Rain; yet before *Elihu* speaks of them, he doth two things by way of Preface, to lead us with more reverence towards God, into that discourse of Nature, in which much of God appeareth.

First, *Elihu* tells us, how himself was affected, either with the present sense, or with the fore-apprehension of those things concerning which he was about to speak; *At this also my heart trembled, and it moved out of its place.*

Secondly, He stirs up the whole Auditory then present, and all others, to a diligent attention and serious consideration of them. Vers. 2. *Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth.*

Having spoken thus in way of Preface, *Elihu* proceeds, first, to a description of Thunder, with its immediate fore-runner, as to our sense (the eye being quicker to receive its object than the ear) though in truth, and according to reason, its companion, the Lightning, in the three Verses following (3, 4, 5,) concerning both which he shewes,

First, that they go not at random, but have a guide, he directeth it, that is, the Thunder and Lightning.

Second-

Secondly, He shews the extent of their motion and Gods direction, they are not confined to this or that part, *He directeth it under the whole heaven,* and his lightnings unto the ends of the earth, in the same Verse.

Thirdly, He speaks of the irrevocableness of Gods decrees and orders about them, at the 4th Verse, *After it a voice roareth,* &c. *and he will not stay them when his voice is heard.*

Fourthly, He concludes about these and many other works of God, with an Elogie of all his works. First, In their greatness; Secondly, In their incomprehensibleness; or he concludes them, not only great, but wonderful and incomprehensible (Vers. 5.) *God thundereth marvelously with his voice, he doth great things which we cannot comprehend.*

Having thus spoken of Thunder and Lightning, he proceeds, Secondly, To shew the power of God, which he describes in Snow and Rain.

First, from their efficient cause, at the 6th Verse.

Secondly, By their effects. First, Towards men, in the 7th Verse. Secondly, Upon or towards irrational Creatures, the Beasts of the earth, at the 8th Verse.

Thirdly, He sets forth the Power of God in the Winds, concerning which we have,

First, Their original, whence they come (Vers. 9.)

Secondly, Their effects, or what they produce, cold and frost, in the latter part of the 9th and 10th Verses.

Fourthly, He treats of the Clouds, and about them he declares four things.

First, The melting or dissolving of them into Rain, at the 11th Verse.

Secondly, The scattering and dispersing of them by the wind, in the latter part of that Verse.

Thirdly, The disposing and ordering of them by the counsel and command of God, at the 12th Verse.

Fourthly, Their uses, ends and operations, at the thirteenth Verse.

Thus we have the first general part of the Chapter opened, containing a description of the Meteors, or manifold works of God in the Air, all which hold forth and advance his mighty power and righteous administrations in this world, towards

wards the children of men; which was the poynt that *Elihu* had laboured in all along, and undertaken to demonstrate.

In the second part of this Chapter, *Elihu* (upon the whole matter) gives *Job* serious counsel and admonition, wherein,

First, He stirrhim up to consider these wonderful works of God, at the 14th verse.

Secondly, He asserts and urgeth the weakness and inability of *Job* (or indeed of any man) to understand them fully; this he doth,

First, In general, at the beginning of the 15th verse, *Dost thou know when God disposed them? &c.*

Secondly, More particularly, in their several kinds.

First, *Of the Rainbow*, at the latter end of that 15th verse, *and caused the light of his Cloud to shine.*

Secondly, *Of the Clouds* and their various motions, at the 16th verse.

Thirdly, *Of the heat* according to the wind (vers. 17.)

Fourthly, *Of the Heaven or Skie* (vers. 18.)

All which were such as he could not give a clear account of, and therefore at the 19th verse, *Elihu* bids *Job* do it if he could, as for himself he durst not venture upon it (verse. 20.) nor can any (saith he vers. 21. 22.) see far into these natural things, or into the nature of these things. These are the special poynts of his admonition to *Job*; and from these he passeth to the

Third Part, or Conclusion of the Chapter, and of his whole discourse with *Job*; wherein,

First, He makes a recapitulation of, or sums up all that he had said of the unsearchableness of God in his works; this he doth in the former part of the 23d verse.

Secondly, He sets down positively what God is, in a three-fold Excellency.

First, *Of Power.*

Secondly, *Of Judgment.*

Thirdly, *Of plentiful Justice*, at the middle of the 23d verse.

Thirdly, He tells us what God will not do, at the end of the 23d verse, *He will not afflict*; and from all, makes two inferences at the the 24th verse.

First, *That therefore men ought to honour and to fear him.*

Secondly, *That therefore God is not in the reverence nor fear*

of any man, in the close of that 24th verse; *He respecteth not any that are wise of heart.*

Thus I have given a prospect of the whole Chapter. Now to particulars, beginning with those two verses by which *Elihu* leads in his discourse of those wonderful workes of God.

First, By shewing how himself was affected with them.

Secondly, By calling upon others to be affected as himself was.

¶
Propter hoc.

Vers. 1. *At this also my heart trembled.*

At this, that is, by reason of this, or for this cause, or because of this; so the word is rendred (*Gen. 2. 23.*) *She* (said *Adam* of his wife, or *Second-self*) *shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.* So here, at this, or for this cause, *my heart trembled.* It may here be questioned, what it was at which the heart of *Elihu* trembled? I shall give a double answer to that querie.

First, Some conceive that while *Elihu* was speaking about, or about to speak further of that marvelous work of God, the *Thunder*, God, to confirm what he had said, or should say, at that very instant caused it to thunder, that so *Job* might be in a more humble reverential frame, and so the better prepared to receive what *Elihu* had further to say unto him. That there was a storm at or about that time, may appear from the first verse of the 38th Chapter; *then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said;* and we find that God hath often given great discoveries of himself in or by Thunder and Lightning. In Thunder and Lightning the Law was delivered to *Moses* on mount *Sinai* (*Exod. 19. 6.*) And to affect the people of *Israel*, when they had provoked God by their peremptory and discontented way of asking a King, *Samuel* coming to deal with them about it (*1 Sam. 12. 16, 17, 18.*) said, *Stand and see this great thing, which the Lord will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat-harvest to day? I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send Thunder and Rain, that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great. And the Lord sent Thunder and Rain that day,* even while *Samuel* was speaking, for their conviction and humiliation, as the next words shew, *and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel.* Thus possibly while *Elihu* was about to speak of Thunder, for the humbling of *Job*, God commanded it to Thunder for his deeper humiliation: and if so, the cause why *Elihu* trembled is apparent enough; The terrible Thunder-claps which

which then rent the Clouds and even shook the earth, might well cause him to tremble.

Secondly, We may understand these words (*at this my heart trembleth*) with reference to the whole matter which *Elihu* had before him; what he had begun to speak, and was further to speak of Gods dreadful power, might shake his heart with astonishment.

The due apprehensions of the greatness of God, may soon strike man into a fit of trembling; it did *Job*, as himself confessed at the 21th Chapter of this Book (v. 5, 6.) *Mark ye, and be astonished, and lay your hand upon your mouth; for when I remember, I am afraid, and trembling takes hold of my flesh*: As if he had said, while I duly consider the great things that I have spoken, & those greater things (if greater may be) that I am about to speak, I cannot but tremble, and stand as one filled with astonishment. How was the Apostle *Paul* amazed at that most mysterious dispensation of God in calling off his ancient people the *Jewes*, the seed of *Abraham* his friend, for so long a time! (*Rom. 11. 33.*) *O the Depth! &c. At this my heart trembleth*, that is, I am heartily afraid.

The heart is here put for the whole inner man, or for all the powers of the soul; and the word rendered to tremble, notes a disturbance of the whole man, both of soul and body. the Septuagint render it by the same Greek word used (*Math. 2. 3.*) where (upon the wise mens coming from the East, to inquire concerning the King of the *Jewes*) it is said, *When Herod heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him*. That news of a new King put them into a grievous fright, they knew not what to make of it, nor which way to turn themselves, in such a turn of affaires, in such a new world as that new-born King might make. This word is else-where in Scripture used to note the suddenest surprize and the strongest possession of fear. Thus when *Isaac*, through the subtilty of *Rebekah*, had given the blessing to *Jacob* which he intended for *Esau*, 'tis said, that upon the appearance of his mistake, *he trembled exceedingly* (*Gen. 27. 33.*) Doubtless it did wonderfully astonish the good old man, to think, that God should carry him beyond and beside his own purpose, to bless the younger brother instead of the elder. This strange disappointment by the overruling providence of God, put him to a stand, and troubled his thoughts more than a little; especially, because he was now taught, that by his carnal affections to *Esau*, he was running quite cross to

Kkk 2 the

Quoties mihi
divina maje-
statis abyssus
in mentem ve-
nerit, expro-
bit cor meum,
&c. Brent.

תתח
מחשבותי, ומומו-
תו סוף גופי
אני ונפשי, וכל
עצמי ונפשי
מלי.
ה' עש' ח' מ.
Sept.

the mind of God, revealed (Chap. 25. 23.) Read the same force of the word (*Exod. 19. 16.*) to which the Apostle referring, saith (*Heb. 12. 21.*) *So terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.* Read also the same importance of the word 1 *Sam. 4. 13.* Chap. 14. 15. Such was the Condition of *Elihu*, he was deeply affected, trembling took hold of him. The Spirits run to the heart in a time of fear, or upon a sudden fright, as Citizens to the Castle in a day of danger; and then the outward members (being deserted by the spirits) grow cold and tremble. There is a natural infirmity called, *The palpitation or trembling of the heart*; But this of *Elihu* was supernatural, at least, some-what more then natural, as arising either from the consideration of what God had done, or of what himself was about to speak; and not only did his heart tremble, but

Was moved out of its place.

Cordis palpi-
rano & totius
animæ concur-
sus ad cor in
pavoribus evi-
dens est. Galen.
ἀνέστην,
Effluxit. Sept.
Evulsus est.
August.
Evulsus est.
Hieron.
Salutis seu subsistit
Tharg.
Hic verbis ex-
cessum querit
Græci ἐκστασι
vocant, hunc de-
notari, quæ (ut
effectus causam)
admirationsm
cum pavore
subsequi solet.
Bold.
... Et humanas
motura toni-
trua mentes.
Ovid. 1. Met.

Which is added to set forth the exceeding greatness of that fear which seized upon him. The Text speaks as if his heart *were indeed removed* or taken out of his body. It is usual in Scripture to affirm that as done which is like to be done. The ship was said to be broken (*John 1. 4.*) and the net (*Luke 5. 6.*) because both were in eminent danger of breaking. We say of a man in great fear, his heart is ready to leap out of or out at his mouth. One of the Ancients renders here, *my heart is pluckt out*; the septuagint, *It floweth out*; the Chaldeæ paraphrase, takes up the former expression; *my heart leaps or jumps*, which as it doth sometimes for joy, so often for fear, or at the unexpected appearance of danger. Some conceive by this moving of his heart out of his place, that *Elihu* was in a kind of extatic, that he was, as it were, carried out of himself, upon the hearing of that dreadful voice of God, the thunder; taking it so.

Note,

Thunder is a terrible thing;

It hath made and may make the stoutest heart to tremble. One of Christ's Apostles was called *Lebbeus* (*Mat. 10. 3.*) as much as to say the *heartly man*, or *all-heart*; Now he that is *Lebbeus* a man of the greatest courage, the most hearty man, may be put to a tremble at this, when he heares it thunder. Heathens have spoken much of this, and by a peculiar word have called those who are much amazed

amazed men *thunderstruck*, men being so much amazed at the sound of thunder. The *Roman* Historian reports of that great Emperour, who commanded all the world, and made the nations to tremble, that yet he himself trembled at this. *Augustus* Caesar, was so afraid of thunder, that when-ever he travelled abroad, he caused the skin of a Sea Calfe to be carried about with him, because it was in their superstition believed to be an Amulet or preservative against any hurt by thunder. And the same Author tells us of another of that ranke, a heathen *Roman* Emperour, that was so afraid of thunder, that he would hide his head when he heard it, and sometimes ran under a bed for shelter. I shall have further occasion to speak of the terribleness of thunder, at the 4th and 5th verses; I touch it here, because, according to our interpretation, this was it at which the heart of *Elihu* trembled.

Secondly, Taking the words more generally, as this trembling might arise from the consideration of any other of the wonderful works of God,

Note;

The great appearances of God in his power may and should affect us even with feare and trembling.

The heart of man may wel move out of his place when he considers how dreadful God is in his place, and what wonders he both doth and can do. *David* casting his eye up to the heavens and the host of them (*Psal.* 8.) concludes with admiration (v. 8.) *O Lord our God, how excellent is thy Name in all the world!* They who have but little knowledge of the works of God, cannot be much affected with them; they who know them deeply cannot, but be deeply affected with them. Fooles and ignorant persons slight or lightly pass by any thing that God doth or speaks; but they who are wise-hearted will lay both his Word and Works to heart, their hearts will tremble and be moved out of their place. Holy King *David* adviseth the Kings and Judges of the earth to *serve the Lord with feare and to rejoyce with trembling* (*Psl.* 2. 11.) And the holy Apostle *Paul* exhorteth all Christians to *work out their salvation with feare and trembling* (*Philip.* 2. 12.) *Now if we are to tremble in our dayly service, how much more under dreadful providences!*

For the close of this poynt, remember there is a four-fold trembling

Hos Latina,
Attonitos vo-
cat. *Attonitus*
est, cui casus
vicini fulminis
et sonitus to-
nitruum dant
stuporem. Serv.
in tertium
Anid.
Tonitru dici
videtur a ter-
rendo, quod
conterreat ho-
minem. Aliqui, a
tono et ruendo,
quia magno
cum sonitu fiat
et irruat.
Suetonius de
Augusto &
Caligula.

bling or moving of the heart at the appearances of God, or at the discoveries of his Power and Glory in his Word and in his Works.

First, That which is natural. (*Isa. 7. 2.*) *When it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim; his heart (that is, the heart of Ahaz) was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the Wood are moved with the wind.* And when Felix heard Paul reasoning of righteousness, temperance, and the judgment to come, he trembled: The Judge trembled at the voyce of the prisoner. 'Tis natural for man to fear and tremble at the report of any truth which renders him guilty, or of any trouble which over-matters his ability to withstand or avoyd it.

Secondly, There is a Legal trembling, proceeding from a spirit of bondage, or the dreadful apprehensions of the wrath of God against sin (*Rom. 8. 15.*) This in many is precedaneous to their true conversion, and, as a needle, makes way for the spirit of grace and adoption, by which thread they are united & fastned unto God through faith, & walk in a child-like fear before him all their days.

Thirdly, There is a penal or judiciary fear and trembling. God in judgement sometimes fills the heart of sinful man with fear, as the punishment of his sin. *They who have no fear of God in their hearts to keep or over-aw them graciously from sinning and living in a course of sin, are delivered up to a spirit of fear, which continually pursueth them with dreadful apprehensions of the wrath of God, and of some imminent and impendent evils, ready to fall upon them for their sins; A dreadful sound is in their ears (as Eliphaz told Job, Chap. 15. 21.) yea, as he speaks there (vers. 24.) trouble and anguish make him afraid; they prevail against him, as a King ready to battel.* The Lord threaten'd it as one of the fore Judgments that he would bring upon his People the Jewes, for their disobedience (*Deut. 28. 65.*) *I will give thee a trembling heart; yea, he threaten'd (Isa. 52. 17.) to give them the dregs of the Cup of trembling.* Ezekiel (*Chap. 12. 18.*) was commanded to tremble, as a sign to the People of that penal fear and trembling which God would send upon them. Such was that trembling spoken of (*Ezek. 26. 16.*) *Then all the Princes of the Sea shall come down from their Thrones, and lay away their Robes, and put off their brodered garments, and shall cloath themselves with tremblings.* Doubtles they had little mind to such change of rayment, they had rather have been cloathed with raggs; but the Lord

Lord would make them do it. And as those confederate Princes or friends of *Tirus* should cloath themselves with trembling, so 'tis prophesied (*Zeck. 13. 2.*) that *Jerusalem* should be, not only a burthen some stone, but a cup of trembling to all her enemies. As if the Lord had said, This shall be their punishment who would make my *Jerusalem* tremble, I will make them tremble at the remembrance of *Jerusalem*, or at the sight of those great things which I will do against them, and for *Jerusalem*.

Fourthly, There is a spiritual, a gracious trembling and moving of the heart; that's it which this point calls us to, and to which, in those places lately mentioned, both *David* (*Psal. 2. 11.*) and the Apostle (*Phil. 2. 12.*) call us to. It was well with *Ephraim*, when it was thus with him (*Hos. 13. 1.*) *When Ephraim spake trembling he was exalted*, that is, when he was in a trembling, humble, self-denying frame, he prospered, and all things succeeded well with him. The Lord is never better pleased with us, than when he sees us in these tremblings (*Isay. 66. 2.*) *To him will I look that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word; These trembling ones are the men that God hath an eye upon and respect unto.* The prophet *Habakkuk* spake of himself (*Chap. 3. 16.*) much like *Elihu* in the text, *When I heard, my belly trembled, my lips quivered at the voice, &c.* The prophet fore-saw a day of trouble, and trembled at it, and this gave him assurance that he should not tremble when he saw it, for (said he in the next words) *I trembled in my self that I might rest in the day of trouble.* The more we tremble in our selves, the more rest we have in God. None have so little fear when trouble comes, as they who fear before it comes. *Noah*, by faith moved by fear, prepared an arke to the saving of his house (*Heb. 11. 7.*) Thus to fear a flood is the best way to escape it. 'Tis not courage, but stupidity, not to fear and tremble, when we hear of the judgments of God. They who tremble graciously shall never tremble despairingly. *At this my heart trembleth, &c.*

Elihu having thus shewed how himself was affected, with a gracious fear and trembling, labours to affect others also with the same fear, in the next verse.

Vers. 2. *Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth.*

We have here a doubling of the word in an unusual way. The Hebrew

*Plus est, inquit
Rab. David,
quam audien-
do audite,
nam insitum
postponitur;
ego nihil aut
parum referre
pato, hoc an
illo modo effe-
as. Druf.*

Hebraisme is ordinarily read, *hearing hear*, but in this place, 'tis *hear in hearing*; which one of the Jewish Doctors saith, hath a greater emphasis than the ordinary Hebraisme *hearing hear*. Others find nothing of such a difference in those differing Hebraismes: however both call for greatest heed in hearing what is spoken, when 'tis either said *hear in hearing*, or *hearing hear*; we should, as our translation gives the sense fully,

Hear attentively.

There is a two-fold hearing.

First, A hearing with the ear of the body: there needs little stirring up of that ear to attend the voice of thunder here spoken of; that speaks so loud that men cannot (if they would not) but hear, that commands audience and attention, that boreth the ear and makes its own way. The deafest adders can hardly stop their eares so, as not to hear the voyce of that (not muttering charmer, but) but rousing speaker, Thunder.

Secondly, There is a hearing with the ear of the mind, a spiritual hearing, such as the Prophet spake of (*Hab. 3. 2.*) *O Lord, I have heard thy speech, &c. that is, I have heard it fully, clearly, understandingly, affectionately, obedientially. Elihu is here stirring up, not so much the outward sense, as the affections, with all the powers of the inner man, to attend and take notice of that which was then to be heard; what was that? Hear attentively*

The noise of his voice.

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*Comotio, per-
turbatio animi
pro metu vel
pro ira.*

*Audite audien-
do cum tremo-
re vocem ejus.*

Merc.

*Omni soni-
tum articula-
tum aut inarti-
culatum signifi-
cat. In gene-
re quemcumque
strepitum.*

The word here rendred *noise*, signifies both an angry noise, and an awful fear (*Pf. 4. 4.*) such a noise as causes fear, or such a fear as is caused by a dreadful noise; Hence some read the words, *Hear his voyce with trembling*; we say, *hear the noise of his voice.*

According to the former interpretation *the noise of his voice* is the noise of thunder; that, if any thing, makes a noise, a dreadful noise, as was toucht before, a noise like the roaring of a Lion. *Hear the noise*

Of his voice.

The word *voice* is taken in general for any sound, articulate or inarticulate (*Ezek. 1. 24.*) and it may very well signify thunder, because thunder in several scriptures is called absolutely, *A voice*,
the

the voice of God, and whole volyes of Thunder are called *voices of God* (*Exod. 9. 28.*) *Pharaoh* entreated *Moses*, that he would entreat the Lord that there might be *no more mighty thandrings*, we put in the margin, *voices of God*. It is said (*Exod. 20. 18.*) the people saw the *Thandrings*, the *Hebrew* is, *voices*; the meaning is, they heard the Thandrings, as if they had been so many voices, or they heard as it were voyces when it thundered. Thus 'tis said (*Rev. 4. 5.*) *Out of the Throne proceeded lightnings, and thandrings, and voices*. Again (*Chap. 10. 3.*) *seven thunders uttered their voyces*. *Hear attentively the noise of his voice*, that is, the noise of his Thunder speaking aloud and aloft in the air.

And the sound that goeth out of his mouth.

The word imports secret, silent meditation, as also an audible sound by voice or words spoken; and it may be applyed particularly to that more gentle, quiet, or whispering sound of thunder, of which I shall have occasion to speak further at the 4th verse. Some Thunders speak very loud, others give a kind of gentle sound. Philosophy tells us, that this difference in thunder ariseth from the different constitution of the clouds in which it is bred, and through which it breaks. The greater may more properly be expressed by the words in the first part of this verse, *The noise of his voice*, and the lesser by these in the latter part, *The sound that goeth out of his mouth*.

Now, Whether it be the noise of his voice, or a whispering soft sound, both or either must be attended; *Hear attentively the sound*

That goeth out of his mouth.

Thunder is said to go out of the mouth of God, as words go out of the mouth of man; and as men, especially the minds of honest men, are known by the words which go out of their mouths, so God maketh himself known to the world, or makes the world both know him and fear him in his power and greatness by the noise and sound of thunder.

Elihu chargeth *Job* to attend diligently this noise, this sound, and he calleth it the noise of Gods voice, the sound that goeth out of his mouth.

קול
Sermo medita-
tio, proprie me-
ditatio. Sermo-
nem etiam sig-
nificat ore pro-
latum.

Tonitruorum
unum genus est
cuius fit grave
murmur, aliud
genus est acro,
quod crepitum
magis dixerim
quam sonum,
aliud fragor
est subitus &
vehemens quo
edito concidunt
homines, &c.
Sen. l. 6. Nat.
q. c. 27.

Hence observe, First;

God speaks to man in Thunder, or, Thunder is the voice of God to man :

*Pectus Jovem
tonantem, &
sonituum vo-
cem Jovis vo-
care solent.*

And so 'tis often called in Scripture ; the 29th *Psalme*, almost throughout, is a proof of it, Thunder being there seven times called, *The Voice of the Lord*. The very Heathens had that apprehension of Thunder, calling it, the Voice of the Gods. *Jupiter* was surnamed, *Thundring Jove*. Here we have *Jehovah*, the true God, the living God, sending out his Voice in Thunder. That Voice spoken of by *David* (*Psal. 68. 33.*) is usually interpreted of Thunder. *Lo, he doth send out his Voice, and that a mighty Voice.* Thunder may be called the Voice of God in a double respect.

*Quod magnum
est divinum esse
dicitur.*

First, Because it is a great and mighty voice ; and then those words (of God) have only the force of an Epithete. As the *Cedars of God, the Rivers of God*, are great Cedars and Rivers, so a great Voice is called the Voice of God. God is great, and therefore great things are alcribed to him.

Secondly, Thunder is called the Voice of God, because God formes, and puts it forth by his power, as a man doth his voice. God may be said to utter his Voice when he sends out the Thunder : And as Thunder is put forth by, or speaks from God, so it puts forth, or speaks much of God, it speaks and puts forth much of the Power and Majesty of God. When it thunders, we should think we hear God, the God of glory speaking to us. Some will excuse themselves, they are ignorant, they have never been taught to know God : But did such never hear it thunder ? that teacheth much of God, so much as will make them inexcusable, who obey him not, who tremble not at his Power and Majesty. Thunder calls for, and more, it commands, our fear of, our reverence and submission unto God, especially when God, together with this voice, sends his arrows, bolts or bullets, to do great things against his enemies, as he did against *Pharaoh* (*Ezod. 9. 23.*) and against the *Philistines* (*1 Sam. 7. 10.*) Yea, the Lord threatened to distress *Jerusalem* with Thunder, and with Earth-quake, and with great noise (*Isa. 29. 6.*) Now, if Thunder be the Voice of God, or the noise of his Voice, then take these brief Inferences from it.

First,

First, Let us see what a powerful and mighty God we have! When it thunders, every believing soul may say, *This is the Voice of my Father*; what cannot he do for me that can speak thus?

Secondly, If God hath such a dreadful Voice, if he thunder with his Voice, we should learn to secure, arm, and fence our selves against the dread and danger of Thunder, by the actings of Faith in him, and of Repentance and godly Sorrow for our sinings against him. Some of the Heathens have given pitiful counsel what to do in time of thunder. *Seneca* was a wise man, yet he directs to poor shifts, in such extremities; *The remedies* (saith he) *against Thunder and the Batteries of the heavens, are underground houses, caves or holes of the earth, to hide our selves in.* These were the best helps he could advise his *Roman* Gallants to, when God uttered his mighty voice in Thunder. But Christians know better how to hide themselves, even in the goodness of God, against those terrible appearances of his Power.

Adversus tonitrua & calorum minas subterraneæ domus, & defossæ in altum specus remedia sunt. Sen. lib. 6. Natur. quest. cap. 4.

Thirdly, If God speak with such a Voice as this in the Air, take heed of slighting his Voice whensoever he speaks in the Church, as Atheists and Epicures do. He who speaks so loud in Thunder can thunder upon us at any time. The Word preached, if not obeyed, will at last come upon all those who obey it not, with as great a terror as Thunder.

Fourthly, Let us not be amazed and frighted at Thunder as Heathens or Unbelievers.

Fifthly, Let us not think lightly of it, as if it either came by chance, or meerly from natural causes.

Sixthly, Let us fear the God of Thunder, not fear Thunder as a God.

Some have superstitiously thought Thunder was a God, and adored it: so 'tis reported of the *Lithuanians* anciently, and possibly some of them do so to this day.

Lithuani saltem deum esse putabant, & propterea illud adorabant. Cromerus, l. 15. Hist. Pol.

Secondly, In that *Elihu* calls so earnestly for attention to this voice, *Hear attentively the noise of his Voice,*

Learn;

Those things which are most easie to be heard, possibly may not at all be understood.

Who doth not hear when it thunders? but how few are there who attend or understand the Thunder, or hear Thunder atten-

tively? God speaks to us, not only with a still voice, few hearing or attending him, but though he thunders few attend him; yea, those works of providence which speak louder than Thunder, and shine clearer than the Lightning, yet are neither heard nor seen. *As when his hand is lifted up some will not see (Isa. 26. 11.)* So when his Voice is lifted up, when 'tis lifted up, not only like a trumpeter, but like thunder, when he speaks most audibly, yea most terribly, some will not hear; and he is not heard by many, much less diligently attended to, how loudly, how terribly soever he speaketh. The Lord often thunders by the voice of his Word; what are his terrible threats but loud thunder-claps? yet few hear, or though they hear, yet they attend not. Not to hear the voice of God in his Word, is as if you did not attend to the voice of Thunder. Every word of God, though spoken with a still voice, hath a greater force in it than Thunder from the Clouds. As the terrible works of God are signified by Thunder (*Rev. 10. 3, 4.*) So the terrible words of God, his threatening words against impenitent sinners, are resembled to Thunder. And therefore such as the Lord fitted among his own Apostles for that dispensation, are called in Scripture *Sons of Thunder* (*Mark 3. 17.*) And they who dispense the Word with a strong voice and fiery zeal, are truly so called to this day, and may be said both to *Thunder in their Exhortation*, and to *Lighten in their Conversation*. And indeed the Word of God truly and faithfully dispensed by any is like Thunder. For,

First, As Thunder, so the Word spoken is the Voice of God, and a more excellent and distinct Voice than Thunder; that only shewing in general that God is, or that he is great and powerful; this shewing us distinctly, who and what God is, and what he requireth of us.

Secondly, Thunder throwes down and dissipates high things; So doth the Word of God. (*2 Cor. 10. 5.*)

Thirdly, Thunder is irresistible by any power of man, it will make its way through all opposition; so is and doth the Word of God.

Fourthly, Thunder pierceth very subtilly, it reacheth the bones quire through the flesh; the Word of God doth more, it divideth soul and spirit, and the joynts and marrow, and is a discerners of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (*Heb. 4. 12.*)

Fifthly,

Fifthly, Thunder breaketh the hardest things which resist it, but not soft things; so the Word of God breaks the stout, but binds up the contrite spirit; it *resists the proud, but giveth grace to the humble* (Jam. 4. 6.)

Now if the Word of God be in all these respects like Thunder, Let us not only hear, but attend, or as the text saith, hear attentively the sound of his voice.

If any ask, when do we both hear and attend with the inward and outward ear, the Thunder of God, or his voice both in his works and in his word? I answer,

First, When we are stirred up to high and holy thoughts of God. We are never rightly affected with the Word of God, till our hearts are wrought up to, and deeply, at least truly, affected with the God of the Word.

Secondly, When our hearts are raised up in thankfulness for any discoveries of God in his goodness and mercy to us, who can so easily destroy us by his power. He that trembles at this voice of God, and hath no sense nor taste of his goodness, nor is moved to praise and serve him, trembles only like a bruit beast.

Thirdly, When we learn to depend and hang upon him for all, as he that can do all things graciously for us, as well as speak so terribly to us; then we *hear diligently the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth.*

For the close of this matter I shall only adde; That though we ought to be affected with the voice of God in his Word, as with his voice in Thunder, yet let us not stay in that, which notes chiefly, if not only, that dread of God which the word leaves upon our spirits; but let us look after and labour for that effect of the Word, which like the beames and light of the Sun, may warme our hearts with joy, and leave strongest impressions of the kindness and favour of God upon them. Mr. Forbes, opening that Scripture (Rev. 14. 2.) where St. John saith, *He heard a voice from heaven*, and that of three sorts.

First, *He heard a voice, as the voice of many Waters.*

Secondly, *As the voice of a great Thunder.*

Thirdly, *He heard the voice of harpers harping with their harpes.* Upon consideration of this threefold voice, which St. John heard, the fore-named worthy Author, takes up a meditation to this purpose. The word of God (saith he) hath three degrees of operation in the hearts of men.

First,

First, It comes into mens eares, *as the sound of many waters*, which is a kind of confused noise, and commonly bringeth neither terror nor joy, but a wondering acknowledgment of a strange force, and more than humane power; as we read of those (*Mark. 1.*) who having heard the word of Christ were *astonished at his doctrine* (v. 22.) and were all amazed (v. 27.) *inasmuch that they questioned among themselves, what thing is this? what new doctrine is this?* But knew not what to make of it.

The second degree is, that the Word of God cometh to the ear of man like Thunder, which causeth not only wonder, but greater astonishment and amazement. Both these may be in a wicked prophane person, and are often found upon common professors.

But there is a third degree or effect of the Words operation, which (strictly taken) is proper and peculiar to the Elect, and that is, when the Word heard is *as the voice of harpers harping with their harpes*; that is, when the Word doth not only affect us with admiration, or strike the heart with astonishment and terrour, like the *sound of many waters*, and the *voice of Thunder*; but also filleth it with sweet peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, when the Word is like melodious musick to the soul, ravishing us with divine delights, and raising us up to a heavenly life, while we are here sojourning on this earth.

J O B, Chap. 37. Vers. 3, 4, 5.

3. He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his Lightning unto the ends of the earth.

4. After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency, and he will not stay them when his voice is heard.

5. God thundereth marvelously with his voice: great things doth he, which we cannot comprehend.

Elisha having shewed in the two former verses, how much himself was affected with what God then did, or with what himself was about to say concerning the doings of God; having also called upon others for due attention, and laboured to make the same impression upon their spirits that he found upon his own; he proceeds to speak to the special matter.

First, To the workes of God in those terrible fiery Meteors, Thunder, and Lightning, which he doth in the three verses now under discussion; and then goeth on to speak of other wonderful workes of the wonder-working God, in the following part of this Chapter, as was before shewed, in laying open the whole.

Vers. 3. He directeth it under the whole heaven.

This verse holds forth the divine guidance of those things which seem most remote from any guidance; *He directeth it under the whole heaven.* Here we may consider,

First, In whose hand this guiding power is; *He*, that is, *God directeth it.*

Secondly, how far he guideth, or the extent of his guiding power; 'tis not limited, but universal, far and near, even under the heaven, and to the ends of the earth.

There is some variety, as of reading, so of interpretation, about this verse, arising from the various significations of that word which we render *directeth*; there is a threefold sence given of it.

First, As taken from a root which signifieth to *press* or *squeeze*, and so 'tis applied to the pressing of grapes, which causeth the juice or liquor

Aliqui a Rabinica שרש
quod est resolu-

vere, humilitate,
re, exprimere.
Hinc & Sep-
tember ab illis
תשרי
Tishri dictum,
quasi expresso-
ritur, quod eo
mense fiat Vin-
demia. Merc.

Alii שור
inuenerunt
re, considerare,
quasi Deus om-
nia sub celo
consideret. Sed
nec Grammati-
ca convenit
(tum enim
שור
dicendum fuit)
nec sensus
admodum,
propter affixum
Merc.
Subter omnes
celos ipse con-
siderat. Vulg.
שור
a radice ש
quod est dirigi
re, rectificare.

liquor of them to flow out: And upon that consideration the seventh month of the year, our *September*, hath its name among the Jews from this word; because then the Vintage being ready, the ripe Grapes are gathered and prest into Wine. From this notion of the word, some render the text thus, *he presseth or dissolveth it under the whole heaven*; that is, God presseth the Cloud as a bunch of Grapes is pressed (these Interpreters make that the antecedent to it, *he presseth it*, that is, the Cloud) and so causeth it to rain. 'Tis God who presseth and (as I may say) squeezeth the Clouds by his power, and then showers fall down and distil upon the earth *under the whole Heaven*. That's a truth, and some-where else spoken of in this book, where we read of Gods melting or pressing the Clouds as we do a bunch of Grapes or a sponge, so causing them to give forth rain.

Secondly, Others derive the word from a root that signifieth to *behold attentively*, to behold and consider: Thus the latine translator renders it, *he considereth under the whole heaven*; that is (according to this interpretation) there is a Providence of God, a wise and an unerring Providence of God at work in all places, he considers and takes notice of all things under heaven, the least motion of the Creature falls under his inspection, *He beholdeth, or considereth under the whole heavens*; that's a truth also; yet, I conceive (with others) the Grammar of the Text will not well comply with this reading: Therefore

Thirdly, I conclude our own translation most suitable both to the Original text, and to the scope of this whole Chapter. Now, according to our rendring, the word comes from a root which signifieth to *set a thing right* or strait, and from that a person who is right, a man of a right spirit, who squares and orders his actions by a right rule, and to a right end, is expressed (*Chap. 1. 1.*) where *Jobs* character is given by this word, *A man perfect and right*, we say, upright, that is, a man that hath right aimes, and walkes by a right rule. *Moses* (*Deut. 32. 15.*) calls the people of God (collectively as one man) *Jeshurun*, that is, a people that are or should be right and upright with God. Thus here, *he directeth it*, that is, God doth, as it were, by a strait line, level or take his aim, when he dischargeth the Thunder in the Cloud: As he that dischargeth his gun, small or great, or shoots an arrow, levels and directs it at a mark, so *the Lord directeth it*. What is this it? 'Tis plain

plain, by what followeth in the latter part of the verse, where the Lightning is expressly mentioned, that he means the Thunder or the Thunder-bolt, for the Clouds are, in that case, charged with bolts: we have had many dreadful instances, as well in ancient Histories, as in our own time, of Thunder-bolts like Bullets shot from the Clouds. As if *Elihu* had said, whither-soever the Thunder-bolt goeth, to what quarter of the world soever 'tis designed, it receives commission and direction from God, what to do, and where to fall, whom it shall smite, or what mark it shall hit; *He directeth it under the whole heaven,*

And his Lightning to the ends of the earth.

Naturalists define or describe Lightning thus; 'Tis a bright shining, caused by exhalations fired in and violently breaking out of the Clouds. The Hebrew is, *his light*. The Sun is the fountain of Light, and that is eminently Gods Light; but the Light here spoken of, is not the ordinary Light shining in the Air, by the rising of the Sun; this Light is Lightning, which is a sudden flashing or breaking forth of light from the Clouds; as when a gun is fired or discharged, a light flasheth from it; such is that which Authors of all sorts call *Lightning*, and here the Scripture calls *his Lightning*. At the 3d Verse the Thunder was called *his Voice*, the Voice of God; and in this, the Lightning is called *his Lightning*; *Elihu* appropriates it unto God himself, *his Lightning*. This Lightning hath more than light in it, it hath heat and fire in it; though we do not alwayes feel it, yet many have, the effects of heat and fire appearing sadly upon them. And this is such a fire as water cannot quench; and therefore we often read in Scripture, of Lightning joyned with the Ruin (*Psal. 135. 7. Jer. 10. 13. Jer. 51. 16.*) which may be remark't as one of the wonders of it. There is a second, that the Lightning is said to fall from heaven. When the disciples brought a report back to Christ what great things they had done, what conquests they had got over evil spirits, Christ answered (*Luke 10. 18.*) *I saw Satan like Lightning fall from heaven*. Lightning falls from heaven; for though Lightning of its own nature (being fiery) should ascend, yet it descends through the power of God. Naturalists observe it as a wonder, that the Lightning should descend: *Seneca* demonstrates, it could not be, unless there were a divine power in it, that the Lightning

Fulgur seu corusatio est flammæ mixtio ab exhalationibus accensæ, & ex nubibus erumpentibus exorta.
Arist. 2. Meteor. cap. 9.

Ignis sua natura in verticem surgit, & finitibus illi prohibet, ascenderet; fulmen autem cadit eadem necessitate, quæ emittitur; nihil itaque dubii relinquatur, quoniam divina illi virtus insit. Seneca.

Mmm

should

should come down from heaven; and as *Elihu* said before, *he directeth it, or the Thunder, under the whole heaven*; so we are here to take up that word again, and say, *He directeth his Lightning*

To the ends of the earth.

אלה
Ala, proprie
arum est
הוא תפוצצו
והוא, הו' Sept.

Here is the act, and the extension of the act, *to the ends of the earth*; the Hebrew is, *the wings of the earth*, so the word is used (*Gen. 1. 21.*) *God created great whales, &c. and every winged fowl.* The ends of the earth are called *the wings of the earth*, because they are the farthest out-stretchings of the earth; as a bird when she flies stretcheth out her wings to the utmost. They are also called, *The corners of the earth* (*Ezek. 7. 2.*) *Thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God unto the land of Israel: an end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land*; the Hebrew is, *upon the four wings (or ends) of the earth*; as if he had said, an end is come upon the East and West, North and South. These *four wings*, or *extreams* of the earth, are the same which *Christ* called the *four winds* (*Mat. 24. 31.*) where speaking of the Resurrection at the last Judgment, he shews how all that are raised shall be brought to one place or general Session, and he shall send his angel with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his Elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other, that is, from the four ends, corners, skirts, or wings of the earth. The utmost extremitie of a garment or of a land, according to the Hebrew, is called, the wing of it. Now forasmuch as *Elihu* represents God, thus directing both the Thunder and Lightning,

Observe first;

All the motions of the Creature, even the most violent, and, to appearance, contingent motions of the Creature, are under the direction, yea, under the dominion of God.

Thunder and Lightning go the way which God appointeth and chalketh out to them; they move not of themselves, they move not whither men or devils would have them, but whither God would have them. The Devils, I grant, have great power in the Air, yet 'tis limited by, and wholly subordinate to the will and power of God. As the reasonable creatures and their motions, that is, the motions of Men and Angels, are under the direction of God, as *Jeremiah* speaks (*Chap. 10. 23.*) *It is not in him that goeth*

goeth to direct his own steps. The Hebrew useth a word there which may be rendred to prepare, to establish, or to confirm, neither of which are in him that goeth; we render it according to the present text, *it is not in him that goeth to direct his own steps*; who directs them then? *It is God that directs the steps of man. It is not in the power of man to direct his own steps, he is not able to do it; and besides that, he hath not the liberty or priviledge to do it, he may not do it, he ought not to do it; 'tis the duty as well as the safety of man to leave the direction of his wayes and steps to God.* 'Tis God that directs the steps of man, yea, the *indirect steps of man are under the mighty power of God*; the very wandrings of men are under the guidance of God; the motions, yea commotions, the actions, and the most disturbed actions of man are under a most certain disposure and disposition of God: *When men do they know not what, God knows and orders what they do.* Now (I say) as God directs reasonable creatures, men or angels, so unreasonable creatures in their motions; the motions of the beasts of the earth, and the motions of the birds of the air, are all directed by God; yea, the motions of the very inanimate creatures, of those that have no motion in or of themselves, but whose motion is by some outward violence and pressure put upon them, even their motion also is directed by the hand of God. Thunder and Lightning are inanimate liveless creatures, they have no motion of their own, but by impression and violence, yet God directs their motion as truly, as he doth the motions of those creatures which move by the most deliberate actings of their own will, reason, and understanding. What is there so violence in its motion as Thunder? What is there so swift in its motion as the Lightning? of which Christ being about to give his people warning, not to believe those deceivers, who say, *Lo here is Christ*, &c. saith (Mat. 24. 27.) *For as the Lightning cometh out of the East, and shineth even unto the West, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be*; that is, as the Lightning instantly passeth from one part of the heaven to the other visibly, so shall the coming of the Son of man be, a sudden, swift, and visible coming; Ye shall not need to go into corners to shew or see him, for he shal come as the Lightning discovering himself to all by the brightness of his coming. There was such an apprehension of the swiftness of the Lightning among the Ancients, that though the Latine word signifying *to Lighten*, is accented

*Christus non
venit clari
aut invisibili
ter ut illi vo
lunt, qui jactant
se habere
christum in de
serto, in urbe, in
claustro, in con
ditorio, sed pa
lam, ut fulmen
editum per om
nia lucet. Coc.*

*Ad significan-
dam hanc & mu-
liti subitae
lucis eraptione
nem m's erat
antiqua media
sua corrupta
ut dicerent ful-
gore. Sen. lib.
2. Nat. quest.
cap. 56.*

long, yet because Lightning is so swift in motion they were wont to pronounce it short; Lightning being so quick and active, they thought it was not suitable to draw it out in speaking by a long pronunciation. But though Lightning have such a violent and swift motion, yet 'tis under Gods command and direction, and it shall make no more haste than God will. An arrow flies with a very violent and swift motion, yet it is God that directeth the arrow, he directs it more than the man that shoots it; and when a shot is made, as we say, at random, God then directs it; as in that notable history of *Ahab*, when he, against the counsel of God given him by *Micaiah*, would needs go up to the battel at *Ramoth Gilead* (1 Kings 22. 34.) the text saith, *There was a man who drew a bow at a venture*, we put in the Margin, *He drew a bow in his simplicity*, he had no special intention against *Ahab*, he did not aim at *Ahab* when he shot his arrow, but God carried it to the right mark, to fulfil that which he had determined and spoken concerning *Ahab*; yea, he directed it not only to the right man, but to the right place, the joynt of his armour. When in battel, arrows, and darts, and bullets are sent forth, as so many thunder-bolts, the Lord directs them and hands them whither they shall go, whom they shall hit, and where. God also directeth the thunder-bolts of his Word, where and whom they shall hit. And (to the point in general) **that the Lord hath a guidance over those things that are most contingent**, we may see in that of *Moses*, when he gave a Law from the Lord about the man that goeth with his Neighbour to cut Wood; *If* (saith he) *the head slip from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour that he die, he shall flee into one of those cities and live* (Dent. 19. 5.) The reason of this Law is expressed (Exod. 21. 13.) because in such contingent cases God delivers him into his hand; the man had no intent to hit his Neighbour, but fetching a blow, the head flieth from the helve, and both hits and kills him; and to shew that this contingency was ordered by God, the text saith, *God delivered him into his hand*.

*Providentia
non est incerta
aut vaga.*

And forasmuch as God hath such a power over the motions of the creature, it may be matter of comfort and encouragement to us, not only with respect to Thunder and Lightning, that we should not fear them, as the heathen, who neither know nor fear God; but we may take comfort from hence also, with respect to the most violent and hurried motions that we see here below. When

we

we find men acting like Thunder and Lightning, without deliberation, when they are all in passions and perturbations, yet let us know, these violent motions shall not fall any where by chance or hap hazard, nor by their own sway, but as God appoynts and overrules them; they shall either fall quite besides the marke which men aimed at, and so do no hurt to any, or if they do, God orders what hurt they shall do. *He directeth it under the whole heaven.* Let us carry this consideration alwayes with us, and it will be a great stay to our minds in all the violent motions of the creature.

Again, from the extent of this divine direction or providence of God, as to these things; *He directeth it under the whole heaven, and unto the ends of the earth,* that is, every where;

Note;

The providence of God reacheth to all places.

His orders go forth into all lands, his dominion is under the whole heavens and unto the ends of the earth (*Psa'm. 65. 5.*) *He is the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the Sea.* God is not helpful to his people in one place of the earth, and not in another, or helpful to them upon the earth, and not upon the Sea, but to the ends of the earth, and upon the broad sea *he is their confidence,* that is, they may confide and trust in him where soever they are. Hence that expostulation in the prophet (*Jeremiah 23. 23.*) *Am I (saith the Lord) a God at hand, and not a God afar off?* Some would circumscribe and limit the Power of God, as if being a God neer at hand he could not be a God afar off too, or to those who are scattered to the ends of the earth. But while he puts the question, *am I a God at hand and not afar off?* he puts it out of question, that *he is a God afar off as well as at hand.* The *Syrians* said & pleased themselves in their conceit (*1 Kings 20. 28.*) The Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the vallies; therefore they would change the battel, as if he could order things here and not there; but all shall find & feel him (as they did) a God both of the hills & of the vallies, a God both of the Land and of the Sea, a God both at hand, and afar off. It is said of the Empire of the Sun (*Psal. 19 6.*) *his going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof:* much more may I say of the Empire of God, his going forth is from one end of the earth to the other,

and

Qui summa vo-
git extrema non
deserit, & qui
urique præsens
& equalis est,
etiam in disti-
milibus, sibi
ipsi dissimilis
non est. Gre-
gor.

and there is nothing hid from his wisdom and government. One of the Ancients gives his sentence clearly with this truth; *He (saith he) that ruleth in the highest heavens doth not forsake the ends of the earth, he is every where present, and every where. alike present; though the places are unlike, yet the presence of the Lord is a like when need requires it.* That's further matter of comfort, that under the whole heaven and unto the ends of the earth we may find the Lord ready for us, and disposing all things, not only for good, but for the best. *He directeth it &c.*

Vers. 4. *After it a voice roareth, or, after it he roareth with a voice.*

לִפְנֵי
pro לִפְנֵי
Ellis prapo-
sitionis ב
Post eum. Vulg.
Pro voluntate ac
jubente illo: ut
post deum sit
post ille praece-
perit. Druf.
Antea ambulo-
nes & prae-
nuncii supremi
regis adven-
tanti.

There is another reading of these words, some give it thus; *after him a voice roareth*, That is, after his command; God willing and giving forth an order for it, *a voice roareth*, that is, at his command or word the voice roareth, or followeth. As if the scope of *Elihu* in this Text, were to shew, that neither Thunder nor Lightning stir a foot or haire breadth, till they have a word from God, as indeed they do not. For, though Thunder and Lightning may be called Gods *Ushers* or *Heralds* that go before him & proclame his approach (*Psal. 18. 12, 13, 14.*) yet they follow and come after him; They go before him as to action, yet they come after him as to commission, they go not till he saith go, or hath given them commission to go. That's a profitable reading of the words.

Our translation saith, *after it a voice roareth*, that is, after the Lightning, or as soon as it hath Lightned a voice roareth. Our experience teacheth us that Thunder followeth the Lightning; which we are not to understand according to the nature of the thing, for so Thunder and Lightning are, as it were, born and brought forth together; there is no difference between them at all in time, but there is a difference as to order, at least as to order in our apprehension; and so the one may be said to come after the other, the Thunder after the Lightning; as when a gun, lesser or greater, is discharged, if you are at a distance you may see the fire a considerable time before you hear the report, and possibly the bullet hits the mark before the sound hits to the ear, though the discharge be made in a moment; which some say is because the eye is a quicker sense than the ear, but rather, because light doth in a moment strike through the air, but the sound comes by certain circuits, & fetcheth a longer compass before it comes at the ear, as hath been

Segnius iri-
rant animos de-
missi per aurem
quam quæ sunt
oculis subiecta
fidelibus.
Horat.

been toucht ſarely before, as alſo at the 26 verſe of the 28 chapter. And beſides this, or any other reaſon of the thing in nature, conſtant experience teacheth us that we ſee the light firſt and then hear the voice; and therefore *Elihu* ſpeakes here very congruouſly to both, *After it a voice roareth*. And as the reaſon of this in nature (as was ſhewed) is that more ſpeedy paſſage of the light through the air than of the ſound, ſo a moral reaſon may be given of it, which take in this obſervation.

God mindes or warnes us of his Judgments before he ſends them.

When you ſee Lightning you ſay there will be Thunder by and by; as natural Lightning gives warning of Thunder, ſo God gives warning from his word, and providences, when a Thunder-clap of judgment, in any kind, is coming. God never ſends a judgment, but we hear of it before we feel it; God ſpeaks before he ſtrikes (*Matth. 24.*) *Behold, I have told you before*. Lightning tells us Thunder is at hand. God doth not uſe to ſtrike his people with a Thunder-bolt, before he hath given them notice by a flaſh of Lightning; indeed judgments alwayes ſurprize the wicked; how much Lightning ſoever hath been daſhed in their eyes, yet the Thunder comes unawares. The day of the Lord will at leaſt come as a ſnare upon all carnal men, though they have had frequent calls to prepare for it. God in the courſe of nature teacheth us the courſe of his providence, Lightning gives warning that Thunder is coming, and happy are they who take warning by his Lightning, and ſo eſcape the ſtroke of his Thunder; after it a voice

*Fulguratio
oſtendit ignem:
fulminatio emi-
nit, illa (ut ita
dicam) comina-
tio eſt, & cona-
tio ſine iſtu, iſta
jaculatio cum
iſtu. Sen. lib.
2. Nat. Queſt.
cap. 12.*

Roareth.

It hath been already ſhewed that Thunder is the voice of God; here *Elihu* tells us what kind of voice it is, *it roareth*. The word ſignifieth the roaring of a lion, 'tis alſo applyed to the roaring of the Sea, that's a dreadful roaring. Naturaliſts tell us there are ſeveral ſorts of Thunder; every Thunder is not a roaring Thunder, they give five or ſix gradual denominations of Thunder;

*180
r. givis propri-
um leonem.*

First, There is a *ſcreeking or crashing* Thunder.

1. Stridens.

Secondly, There is a *hiſſing* Thunder, as when red hot iron is put into water.

2. Sibilans.

Thirdly, There is a *cracking* Thunder, as when a bladder is broken, or a cheſnut in the fire.

3. Crepans.

Fourthly,

4. *Tumultuans.* Fourthly, There is a *rumbling* Thunder. We sometimes hear only a rushing in the clouds, no crack of Thunder breaking out.

5. *Rugiens.&c.* Fifthly, There is a *roaring* Thunder, as this text speakes, *a voice* *Gargæus Me-* *roareth.* *corolog.*

Sixthly, There is a *whispering* Thunder, I may call it a kind of silent or still-voiced Thunder; possibly that was such spoken of (1 Kings 19. 12.) *After the fire, a still small voice.* As also that when Jesus Christ was baptized by John in Jordan (Matth. 3. 17.) *And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased;* 'Tis conceived, that voice came in a still whispering Thunder. Such doubtless was that Thunder (John 12. 28, 29.) when Christ prayed, *Father, glorifie thy Name; then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorifie it again.* At the hearing of this voice, the people that stood by, said that it thundred, others said, that an Angel spake to him. This voice was an articulate sound coming with the Thunder; and the Hebrew word which we commonly translate *voices*, signifieth thunder. The Jewish Writers tell us that (Bath col) the daughter of voice (which they reckon the only way of divine revelation, left them after the Babylonish Captivity) was the will of God made known to them immediately from heaven by this sort of Thunder. *Thunders and voices* are often joyned in the Book of the Revelations (Chap. 4. 5. chap. 8. 5.) implying, the revelation of those prophetick wonders, was made by Voices accompanied with Thunder. And thus those two texts which seem contradictory may be reconciled, *Act. 9. 7.* it is said, *They who journeyed with Paul stood speechless hearing a voice.* But (*Act. 22. 9.*) Paul saith, *They saw indeed the light and were afraid, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.* The voice which they heard in the 9th Chapter was the voice of Thunder, and the voice which they did not hear the 22d, was the distinct articulate voice of Christ, saying, Saul, Saul, Why persecutest thou me?

From this consideration of Gods gradual speaking to us in the Clouds, we may be led to consider how gradually he speaks to us in the Ministry of his Word; there he speaks sometimes whisperingly, gently, he at first awakens the ear a little, but at last he *roareth with his voice.* If we will not hear, he hath louder and louder voices, which we shall hear whether we will or no. At the giving of the Law (*Exod. 19. 19.*) *The voice of the trumpet sounded*

sounded long, and waxed louder and louder. There are different degrees in the loudness of the voice when God speaks to his people. We should take warning by the light that shineth, we should hear the smallest voice, the first whisperings of God, and not put him to his roaring voice. God is said to roar out of Zion (Joel 3. 16.) yea, many times he roareth upon Zion, because of the disobedience and negligence of the Citizens of Zion. After it a voice roareth, the words that follow speak the same thing,

He thundereth with the voice of his excellency.

This is the first time that we have the word *Thunder* exprest in the text, though the sense of the whole place speaks thunder. The word which signifieth Thunder, signifieth any great noise or dreadful cry (Ezek. 27. 35.) (Psal. 96. 11.) it signifieth also the voice of any one that complaineth or bemoaneth his or her condition, or that is troubled or fretted at the croines of relations: It is said of Peninah, *she provoked her* (that is, *Hannah*) *fore* (or, as the Margin reads it, *angred her*) *for to make her fret, because the Lord had shut up her womb*: The word is that of the text, *to make her thunder*, or to cause a tumultuation in her spirit, like that in the Clouds, when heat and cold contend for the masteryes.

Thunder is so unquiet and tumultuous, that any thing which is so, may by a figure be called Thunder. The text speaks of proper Thunder; and if we enquire among Philosophers about the nature and generation of Thunder, some tell us briefly, *Thunder is a crashing or cracking noise made by the stroke of enclosed fires breaking through the Clouds*. Or thus, *Thunder is a dreadful sound in a thick Cloud, caused by the hot and dry exhalation shut up in the bowels of it, which seeking passage out makes its own way with mighty violence*.

But though the matter here treated upon by *Elihu* be philosophical, yet I must remember that mine is a Divinity, not a Philosophy Lecture, and therefore it may suffice me to touch these things, and leave the Reader, who desires to know more of them, or of other mysteries in Nature, to seek his satisfaction in those learned Authors who professedly handle this subject of Thunder; and shall here only take notice that *Elihu* doth not only say, *He thundereth*, but *He thundereth*

ענן
Tonitru, inuon-
it, commotus
fuit præ indig-
natione.
Tonitru est fra-
gor editus ex
p'aga compatio-
rum ignium e
nube erumpen-
tium. Plin.

Tonitru est
horrendus so-
nus in nube
spissa, qui ex-
citatur ab ex-
halatione cali-
da & sicca,
conclusa intra
nubem, quæ
cum fremitu
querens exitu-
rum, magna vi-
olentia erumpit
& undique ni-
bem concutit.
Garcæ. Mete-
orolog. ex
Aristot. lib. 2.
Meteor. c. 9.

With the voice of his excellency.

EXCEL
Excellentia elatio, superna verbum medium est.

That's an explication of *he reareth*. The voice of *his excellency*, is *his high voice*. The word signifieth *pride*, because they that are in high places are so apt to be proud, or because high-mindedness is the same with pride. Proud men think themselves higher than their brethren, as *Saul* was above the people by head and shoulders; therefore the same word signifieth pride and light. The Lord thundereth with the voice of his highness or excellency of his greatness.

Er cōm vspes-
as autē.
In voce comu-
tationis sue,
Sept.
Scotia expli-
cant in voce-
minum plen.

The Septuagint saith, *He thundereth with the voice of his reproach*, or *with his reproaching voice*. A man that is angry poures out his displeasure in reproaches upon such as have provoked him. God knowes how to Thunder just and deserved reproaches upon provoking sinners. The Scoliaſts explain that translation of the seventy, *with the voice of his reproach*, thus, *with or by a voice full of threatening*; and 'tis a truth, the mouth of God is full of threatnings, and his heart of indignation, against presuming sinners. We may put all these together, yet I conceive our own reading most suitable; *He thundereth with the voice of his excellency*, like a great Commander in war, of whom God speaks (*Job 39. 25.*) in that most high-strained, rhetorical description of the strength and courage of the horse; *He smelleth the Battel afar off, the thunder of the Captain, and the Shoutings*. When an Army is engaged in Battel, there is not only a thundering of the Guns, but of the Captains and Commanders, they speak highly, they thunder with a voice of their high courage and excellency; much more doth God in the day of his Battel thunder with the voice of his excellency.

Hence note;

God works like himself, he makes his excellency and his highness appear to the children of men in the very works of nature.

And doth he not often so it in his works of Providence, whether for the Salvation of his faithful people, or for the Destruction of his enemies? I shall not stay upon this point, having met with matter of the same purport more than once before. *He thundereth with the voice of his excellency,*

And

And he will not stay them when his voyce is heard.

'Tis question'd, who are meant by *them*, *He will not stay them*; Some understand the raine and showers, which usually follow upon, or after a great thunder; and we commonly call them *thunder showers*. Others understand the Lightning and the Thunder; as if he had said, When Gods purpose is declared that there shall be lightning and thunder, *he will not stay them*, or take them by the heele, as the word properly signifieth: whence *Jacob* had his name, because when *Esau* was coming into the world, *Jacob* took him by the heele, as if he would have stayed or stopped his birth, at least have got into the world before him; and therefore *Esau* said (Gen. 27. 36.) *Is he not rightly called Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times.* Which some render according to the letter of the Text, *My brother may well be called an Heeler, for he hath heeled me these two times.* In this sense the Lord will not stay the birth and breaking forth of these terrible twins, Thunder and Lightning. Lastly, learned *Junius* refers *them* to the Lightnings only, rendering, *He doth not defer them, when his voyce is to be heard*; which he thus expounds, He sends lightning before, foretelling thunder will follow. But I conceive the former exposition more cleare, which refers this not staying, *er he will not stay*, both to thunder and lightning, in consort or together.

Hence note;

When once God speaks the word, and is resolved upon the doing of a thing, there is no stopping of him, nor will he stay his work.

He will not take thunder and lightning by the heele, when he hath bid them go. We have a parallel sense to this, concerning the thunder and lightning of divine Judgements (Zeph. 2. 1, 2.) *Gather your selves together, O gather your selves together, before the decree bring forth.* As if he had said, If once the decree bring forth, if once God declare that wrath shall come, there is no recalling of it, *He will not stay it when his voyce is heard*; for then (Isa. 43. 13.) *The Lord will work, and none shall let him*; he will not stop it himself, and none else can. Thunder and lightning shall come; whosoever stand in their way must down. And as none

IPV calcaneum tenuit. Aliqui exponunt retardabuntur imperfonaliter, vel retardabit aliquis fulmen vel fulgur cum deus eminare petit. Scult. Neg; differt illa cum audienda est vox ejus. Jun: i. e. fulgura tonitruum prænuncia exhibet. prioris non differt? i. e. præmittit. Jun:

can lett God by power, so none shall lett him by prayer, if once he be resolved, and hath sent forth his decree; therefore do not provoke the Lord to give out the word, for then your case is desperate. There's no opposing the work of God, or God in his working. *He will not stay them when his voyce is heard.*

Vers. 5. *God thundereth marvellously with his voyce; great things doth he that we cannot comprehend.*

Consider how often this word is repeated, *He roareth with his voice, He thundereth with the voice of his excellency*, and here, *He thundereth marvellously*. This may teach us, First, (which hath been noted before) that *the works of God in nature are to be heeded*. Secondly, that *we are very backward to heed them*. Thirdly, *this is so often ascribed to God, least we should think that thunder is only a work of nature.*

God thundereth marvellously.

Tonat mirabilis. Hebr: Numerus pluralis indicat ingentem admirationem & stuporem mortalium ad vocem tonitruus. Rined.

The words may be read, *God thundereth marvels*; 'tis in the plural number: We render well, *God thundereth marvellously*; but there is a greater Emphasis, taking it in the plural number, *God thundereth marvels*. Consider thunder and lightning in a proper, or in a metaphorical sense, there are many marvels or wonders in them. Naturalists observe many marvels in natural thunder and lightnings; these sometimes melt the sword without hurt to the scabbard; dissolve the mettall, not consuming the purse; break the bones, and not the flesh; these spoyle the Wine without flaving or breaking the cask; kill or stifle the child in the womb, and not the mother. God thunders marvellously in these things.

Again, how many marvellous Judgments hath God wrought by thunder! how often hath he destroyed the enemies of his people, and the blasphemers of his great Name, by thunder and lightning from Heaven! *Anastatius* the Emperour, an Eutichian persecutor of the Orthodox Christians, was slaine by thunder. *The History of the Church*, speaks of a Christian Legion or Brigade of Christians in the Army of *Anrelius* the Emperour, who earnestly prayed (the whole Army being in a great strait) that God would appear for their help, and the defeating of the enemy; whereupon the Lord sent raine for their reliefe, as also thunder and lightning, by which the enemy was discomfited and destroyed: where-

whereupon that Legion was called, *The thundering Legion.* When Julian the Apostate, meerly to despise the prophetic of Christ (*Mat. 24.*) who had said of the Temple at Jerusalem, *there should not be left one stone upon another;* Julian, I say, in despite of this prophetic, yea, to despise it, gave command for the building of the Temple at Jerusalem, and upon his command there was a great quantity of materials brought together for that purpose; but the Lord seeing the pride of this enemy, sent a marvellous thunder, with an Earthquake, which not only amazed the workmen, but scattered those materials, & put a stop to the work.

Now as there are many marvels wrought by natural thunder and lightning, so also by that which is spiritual. Nor will it be unuseful for us to consider them upon occasion of what is said of natural thunder in this Scripture.

God thundereth marvellously in the dispensation of his Word, or in his dealings with the souls of sinners, to bring them home to himself, and to turn them from their sins. We may (not excluding the proper sense) profitably expound the whole 29th Psalm in this spiritual sense; wherein the Lord under the Allegory of a terrible thunder-tempest, seems to give a prophetic description of his mighty power in propagating the Gospel to the ends of the earth; which goeth not out as an empty sound beating the aire, but with wonderful efficacy, convincing the world of sin, and of their need of Christ to save them from their sins. And to shew that this is the scope of the Psalm, David begins it with a strong exhortation, (*v. 1, 2.*) *Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give ye unto the Lord glory and strength: Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his Name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.* As if David had said, *O ye, the mighty Princes and Potentates of the world, who in most places and times have contemned God and his holy worship; and being your selves either irreligious, or engaged in a false religion, have used your power against, and hindered the progress of the Gospel, and the advancement of true religion: I advise and admonish you to lay down that spirit, to embrace the Gospel, to love the power of godliness, to propagate the true knowledge of Jesus Christ, and to encourage the faithfull dispensers and professors of it, both by your favour and example, worshipping the Lord in the beauty of holiness.*

¶ If any should ask, Why is the Lord to be so worshipped? why must

must he have such high honours from those that are high? what doth he in the World which calls for such adoration? David answers Meteorologically as well as Theologically, he answers from the Clouds (*vers. 3.*) *The Voyce of the Lord is upon the Waters, the God of glory thundereth; the Lord is upon many Waters; The voyce of the Lord is powerful, the voyce of the Lord is full of Majesty.* As if he had said, Although the Lord Jesus Christ will not set up an outward, pompous, political Kingdome, such as that of *Cyrus* or *Alexander*, &c. yet by the Ministry of the Gospel he will erect a spiritual Kingdome, and gather to himself a Church, that shall abide for ever, out of all the Nations of the earth: For the Gospel shall be carryed and preached to, not only the people of *Israel*, the *Jewes*, but to the *Gentiles* all the world over, that the minds of men may be awakened, enlightned, and moved with that unheard of Doctrine of Salvation by Christ, which had been hid from Ages and Generations.

And though many shall be hardned against, and oppose that glad-tydings, yet because the *God of glory thundereth*, that is, *because the voyce of the Lord is powerful and full of Majesty*; he accompanying the Ministry of the Gospel with power and terror like that of Thunder, home to the Consciences of men, for their conviction and conversion, therefore it shall do great and glorious things, subduing the greatest and stoutest sinners to the obedience of his Will. *This Thunder will cast down the strong holds of sin, and every thing that exalteth it self against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,* (2 Cor. 10. 4, 5.) This is it which the Prophet *David* intendeth (according to this allegorical interpretation) by the effects of Thunder, elegantly expressed (*vers. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.*) *The Voyce of the Lord breaketh the Cedars, yea, the Lord breaketh the Cedars of Lebanon*; that is, proud and high-minded men, who are (in their own conceit) as tall as Cedars, these he will make to see that they are but shrubs, these he will humble and break their hearts by true repentance, for the pride of their hearts, and all the abominations of their lives. Further (*vers. 6.*) *He maketh them also to skip like a Calf, Lebanon and Syron like a young Unicorn*; that is, the Lord by his thundering powerful voyce, first, will make them skip as frightened with fear, and secondly, as revived with joy. Yet more (*vers. 7.*) *The Voyce of the Lord divideth the*

the Flames of fire; that is, will send and divide to every one as they need (1 Cor. 12. 11.) the holy Spirit, who is compared to and called Fire (Mat. 3. 11.) and who came as with a Thunder-storm of a mighty rushing wind, and with the appearance of cloven Tongues, like as of fire, and sate upon each one of the Apostles, (Acts 2. 2, 3.) Nor did this Voyce of Thunder, accompanied with divided flames of fire, reach Jerusalem only; for, as it follows (vers. 8.) *The Voyce of the Lord shaketh the Wilderness, the Wilderness of Kadesh*; that is, the Lord by the voyce of the Gospel shall go forth with power to those *Gentiles*, who are like a wilderness, barren of goodness, and unmanur'd in spirituals, though they dwell in well-govern'd Cities, and are well-furnished with Morals. It shall go forth also to those *Gentiles* who inhabit wast wildernesses, and are not so much as reduced to civility: These wildernesses the thundering voyce of the Lord hath shaken heretofore, and doth shake at this day, and will yet further shake, that the fulness of the *Gentiles* may come in. Many of these wildernesses hath the Lord turned into fruitful fields, and pleasant lands, by the voyce of the Gospel sounding among them. For in these wildernesses (as it followeth vers. 9.) *The voyce of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve*; that is, they that were as wild, as untaught and untamed as the hind or any beast in the Forrest, he brings to the sorrows of their new-birth, to Repentance and Gospel-humiliation: And in doing this *He* (as the Psalmist goes on) *discovereth the Forrests*, that is, opens the hearts of men, which are as thick set and full grown with vanity, pride, hypocrisie, self-love, and self-sufficiency, as also with wantonness and sensuality, as any forest is over-grown with thickets of trees and bushes, which deny all passage through, till cleared away by cutting down or burning up; Such an opening, such a discovery doth the Lord make in the Forrests of mens hearts, by the Sword and Fire, that is, by the Word and Spirit of the Gospel; and when all this is done, the Forrest becomes a Temple, and as that verse concludes, *In his temple doth every one speak of his glory*. And if the floods of ungodliness rise up against this people, whom the thunder and lightning of the Gospel have subdued to Christ and framed into a holy Temple, then the Psalmist assureth us (vers. 10.) *The Lord sitteth upon the flood*, that is, 'tis under his power, he ruleth and over-ruleth it: yea, *The Lord sitteth King for ever*, and (v. 11.) *The Lord will give strength to his people, the Lord will bless*.

blefs his people with peace. Thus the Lord *thundereth marvellously* and these are glorious marvels which he thundereth; he converts sinners. The thunder of the Gospel frights them out of sin, and the grace of it gives them peace.

Thus, though I like not their way who are given to allegorize the Scriptures, yet, I doubt not but we may make a profitable use both of this and many other Scriptures by way of allegory. This being an undeniable truth, which is the ground of it, That the Lord puts forth, as it were, the power of Thunder and Lightning in the preaching of his Word, these two things are to be marked.

First, That Thunder and Lightning are a kind of Word of God to us, they tell us (though confusedly, yet plainly enough, for the conviction and condemnation of gainfayers) there is a God; the greatest Princes of the world have taken notice by Thunder and Tempest that there is a God over all, governing all; nor needs there any more teaching than that to condemne Atheists and Mockers at Religion. We say proverbially of some men, who make a rude noise, they are so loud that we cannot *hear God Thunder for them*; yet know there's no noise can so drown the voice of Gods Thunder in the Clouds, but it will condemn all that hear it not, so as to acknowledg God in it.

Secondly, We should mark, that as Thunder and Lightning are a kind of Voice or Word of God to us, so the Word of God, or the Voice of God, speaking in his Word, is a kind of Thunder and Lightning to us, very mighty, very powerful, even clothed with an irresistibile power and might. And therefore if we take the Prophet David in 29th Psalm before mentioned, speaking, in the former part of it, of the effects of Natural Thunder only; yet toward the close of the Psalm, he applyeth it to the Word of God, while he saith (v. 9.) *And in his Temple doth every one speak of his glory*; that is, the Word and Ordinances of God, ministred in his Church, or Temple, will put every one to acknowledge and speak of the glorious Power of God, even much more than the mighty Thunder which soundeth in our eares, or the subtil Lightning which flasheth in our eyes. There is a far more royal power in the Thunder of the Word, than in the word of Thunder; This terrifyeth only to Conviction, but that terrifieth to Salvation; for after God speakes terror there in his Threatnings, he speaks comfort in the Promises; and when he hath

hath affrighted us with a sense of our sins, and of his wrath due to us for our sins, as with an horrible tempest, he presently refresheth us with the gentle gales of revealed grace, and with the pleasant amiable Sun-shine of his favour by Jesus Christ. And therefore in respect both of the Natural and Spiritual Thunder, considered in the circumstances and consequences of it, *Elihu* might well conclude, as he doth, in the last words of this Verse and manner,

Great things doth he, which we cannot comprehend.

We may take these words, not only as intending the great things of the Thunder, which indeed are such as we cannot comprehend; but, as a transition from Thunder, to those other great things that God doth, set forth in the latter part of the Chapter.

Great things doth he.

God doth the least things, but he can do great things, he doth great things

Which we cannot comprehend.

The Hebrew is, *He doth great things, and we know not*; which may be expounded two ways. *Facit magna & non cognoscimus. Heb.*

First, *We know not*, that is, we take no notice of them. God doth great things, and we are very backward to consider them.

Secondly, *We know not*, that is, he doth such great things, that let us consider and study them as long as we will, let us break our brains to find out the greatness of them, yet we shall never find it out; *He doth great things that we cannot comprehend.* The text is clear, and the sense profitable in either Interpretation; he doth great things which we do not consider, or he doth great things, that when we have considered them, and done the most we can, we cannot come to the full knowledge of them. Naturalists speak much of the causes of these things, yet the clearest sighted among them, could not see the bottom of them, nor reach the utmost reason of them. *Great things doth he, which we cannot comprehend.*

Hence note;

It is both proper and easie to God to do great things.

He is the great God, so great that doing great, things is no wea-

O o o

iness

ness to him. The text doth not say, *he hath done great things*, or, *he will do great things*, but, *he doth great things*, he is alwayes doing great things; and that is a point improveable for the comfort of the people of God. When a great matter is to be done, we say, *who shall do it?* when we are in great troubles and dangers, we say, *who shall deliver us?* If small matters be to be done, we think we or other men like our selves can do them; but when great matters are to be done, we hardly believe, that God can do them for us; yet 'tis all one with God whether the thing be great or little that is to be done, if he please to undertake the doing of it. It is questioned (*Amos 7. 2.*) *By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?* They looked to this and that creature, and saw Jacob so small and low, that they thought he could never rise again; but remember *Jacobs God is great, and he doth great things*, this great thing especially, to raise them that are low and small. What-ever your condition is, remember God is great, and can as well do great things as little, as easily make a world as give you a morsel of bread; there is nothing hard to God; *He doth great things*, and (according to the strictness of the Hebrew text) *we know not*, that is, we consider them not, we take little notice of them.

Hence observe;

The sons of men are commonly very slight thoughted about the great works of God.

When God thunders marvels, we know them not, we lay them not to heart. The Prophet (*Isa. 5. 12.*) sheweth how busie the careless Jews were in their mirth and jollity, *but they regarded not the work of the Lord, neither considered the operation of his hands*. When God is doing great things, one man is getting wealth, another taking his pleasure, but they regard not at all, or have very little regard to what God is doing.

Again, from our reading, *Great things doth he, which we cannot comprehend,*

Note;

God doth great things that are beyond the greatest of our apprehensions, such things, as after all our study we are short in, and short of.

As it is our sin that we take not paines enough to know the great things

things that God doth; ſo God doth things ſo great, that when we have done our beſt, or, after all our paines, we cannot know them fully: though we know their outſide, yet little of their inſide, though we know their effects, yet little of their cauſes and contrivances. *To know a thing, is to know it in the cauſes of it, to ſee the reaſon of it.* A man knoweth not the things that he knows, till he ſee the reaſon of what he knows. How little doth man know of, or ſee into the reaſon of the great things that God doth? How little do we ſee of the marvels that are in the works of God? *The love of God paſſeth knowledge* (Ephes. 3. 19.) Though we labour to know it (and 'tis our ſin that we labour not more to know it) yet we cannot, it ſurpaſſeth all our knowledge. **And as that love of God, which is the firſt mover of all the good and great things that he doth for his people, paſſeth our knowledge, ſo the things that are the effects of that love to his people are ſo great, that they paſs our knowledge.** Hence we may infer theſe two duties.

Scire eſt per cauſas ſive.

Fiſt, Let us be much in the admiration of the great things that God doth. Where knowledge ends, there admiration ſhould begin. It was a ſhame for a Philoſopher to admire, becauſe he was ſuppoſed to know the whole compaſs of nature; but 'tis no ſhame for a Chriſtian to admire, there being many things, not only in the ſpecial diſpenſations of grace, but in the common diſpenſations of providence, which he cannot know comprehenſively, the whole compaſs of which he cannot graſpe or take in with the beſt of his underſtanding.

Secondly, Let us take heed of cenſuring the works of God. Some are very bold in paſſing their Verdicts upon the great things that God doth; this, and that is not ſo well done, this and that might have been otherwiſe done. The great things which God doth pleaſe not many men if they hit not their intereſt, how apt are they to find fault; But ſeeing God doth great things that we cannot comprehend, let us take heed of cenſuring any of the great things that God doth; no man ſhould judge or cenſure that which he doth not, cannot know, and fully underſtand: But uſually *they who underſtand things leaſt, cenſure them moſt, and they are moſt apt to judge, who have the weakeſt judgements.*

J O B, Chap. 37. Vers. 6, 7, 8.

6. *For he saith to the snow, be thou on the earth :
like unto the small rain, and to the great rain of his
strength.*

7. *He sealeth up the hand of every man, that all
men may know his work.*

8. *Then the beasts go into dens, and remain in their
places.*

Elisha having set forth the wonders of divine power in Thunder and Lightning, gives us other instances, to the same purpose, in this context.

First, In the Snow.

Secondly, in the Rain. And he describes the Snow and Rain three ways.

First, By pointing at their Author or producer, in the 6th verse [*He*] that is, God, of whom he spake in the close of the former verse.

Secondly, He sheweth the way or manner of their production [*he saith*] 'tis done by a word, or command, that is, by a word of command; *he saith to the Snow, he likewise saith to the small Rain, and to the great Rain of his strength, be ye on the earth.*

Thirdly, He describes the effects, or consequences, at least, of Snow and Rain; and those are of two sorts.

First, What respects man, at the 7th verse, *He sealeth up the hand of every man, that all men may know his work.* There we have the first effect, the sealing of mans hand, together with the designe or intent of God in it, *that all men may know his work.*

The second effect respects the beasts of the earth, at the 8th verse; *then*, that is, when God hath commanded the Snow and the Rain to be on the earth, *then the beasts go into dens and remain in their places.* Thus we may conceive the parts and general scope of these three verses.

Vers.

Vers. 6. *For, he saith to the Snow.*

That causal particle [*for*] in the front of this verse, imports a reason, or an account given in these words, of what was said before at the 5th verse, *God doth great things which we cannot comprehend*; then presently followeth, *for he saith to the Snow, &c.* As if Elihu had said, not only are Thunder and Lightning, but Snow and Rain to be numbred and reckoned among the great and marvellous works of God; *for he saith to the Snow.*

He saith;

That is, as hath been shewed already, he commandeth. What God saith, shall be, must be, his words are laws, *he saith to, or commandeth the Snow.* Not only doth God give commands to rational creatures, men & Angels, but to meer sensitive creatures, the beasts and to senseless creatures, to vegetives or plants, yea, to inanimates, to things without any life at all, such are Snow and Rain; yet, as if Snow and Rain had an ear to hear, & an understanding to mind a command from God, the text represents God speaking to these,

He saith to the Snow, &c.

The Snow falls in silver showres every year, and covers the face of the earth; All men behold it, but few understand either what it is, or why it is sent. Take this brief description of it from the Schoole of Nature.

Snow is a moist vapour, drawn up from the earth, to, or neer, the middle region of the Air, where it is condensed or thickned into a Cloud, and falls down again like carded wool, sometimes in greater, sometimes in lesser flakes.

Snow and Rain, are made of the same matter, and have their breeding in the same place, only they differ in their outward form, as is obvious to the eye, and their season; Rain falleth in the warmer seasons, the Clouds being dissolved into Rain by heat, or when the cold is more remiss; Snow falleth in the sharper seasons, the Cloud being thickned by the cold. Hence *Solomon's* comparison (*Prov. 26. 1.*) *As Snow in Summer, so honour is not comely for a fool.* Snow is a goodly white robe upon the Winter-body of the earth, or upon the body of the earth in Winter; yet how unseemly is it upon the body of the earth in Summer, hiding and obscuring

Nix est vapor humidus in media aëre regionem subvestitur, ubi in nubem condensatur & congelatur, in flav lane carmin. i.e. demerit per partem, interdum magnas, interdum exiguas, antequam in guttas resolvatur. Garca. Meteor. c. 29.

obscuring, as well as hurting, that which is the natural beauty and ornament of it ; Thus honour is a precious robe, yet no way fitting the back of a foolish or undeserving person. Snow is very improper and unnatural in Summer, because the coldness of it hinders the ripening of the corn, and other fruits of the earth : And therefore when Solomon saith (*Chap. 25. 13.*) *As the cold of snow in the time of Summer, so is a faithful messenger to him that sendeth him.* His meaning is not, that the falling of snow is either comfortable or seasonable in the time of Summer, but that snow gathered in Winter, and reserved (as the custome is in hot countries) till Summer, being put into drink doth exceedingly cool it, and so refresheth those who are ready to faint with heat.

But not to go further from the Text in hand ; we see that Snow and Rain have the same original, both being formed out of vapours. As in mans body (who is a little world) from the Stomack there rise up vapours to the Head, which by the coldness of the brain are changed into, and sent back again in Rheumes and Carrars : So vapours drawn up from the Earth into the Air, are sent back in Snow and Rain. Solomon describing the infirmities of old age, alludes to this, while he warnes the young man, that thus the Clouds will return after the Rain (*Eccl. 12. 2.*) which may be understood either more generally of that succession of troubles to which old age is subject, or more particularly of Rheum and Flegm wherewith old age is molested; the defluxion of the Rheum being as the Rain, and the gathering of new matter, which continually distilleth from the Head upon the Lungs, being as the returning of the Clouds after the Rain. He saith to the Snow

Be thou on the earth.

The place where Snow is generated is in the Air, from thence it receives a command to dispatch it self to the Earth, and there to abide ; He saith to the Snow, *be thou on the Earth*, that is, cover the face of the earth, be thou as a mantle upon the earth, or as a white sheet spread over the whole face of it, until I call or take and dissolve thee into water. The same command which is here thee off exprest concerning the Snow, is also sent forth to the Rain ; He saith to the Snow *be thou on the earth,*

Likewise

Likewise to the small rain, &c.

That is, he saith to the *small Rain*, do thou descend upon the earth. By *small Rain* is meant any gentle Rain, softly and sweetly dropping and destilling out of the Clouds. Now as God orders this *small Rain*, so likewise, as it followeth,

The great Rain of his strength.

The whole Original Text, which we render the *small Rain* and the *great Rain of his strength*, hath a great Elegancy in it, word for word thus, *He saith to the shewre of Rain, and to the shewre of Rains of his strength*. The word *Rain* in both is the same, only the former is in the singular, and the latter in the plural number, which hightens or encreaseth the sence, as Criticks and Grammarians tell us, and therefore we render *small Rain* and *great Rain*; to which *Elihu* gives this further addition in the cloie of the verse, *The great Rain*

Of his strength.

Of whose strength? surely of the strength of God; as if God did in some Rain put forth his mighty strength, and make bare his own Arm in the showrs which he sends upon the earth. *The great Rain of his strength* is that violent Rain which comes forth from God and shews forth to us the great strength of God: For neither of these two Epithetes *small* and *great* are expressly in the Text, yet both the scope and Grammatical construction of the words justifie that Translation, *A shewre of Rain* in the singular number implying a mild gentle Rain, or, as we call it, a *small Rain*; and a *shewre of Rains* in the plural number implying a continued, vehement, fierce Rain, or as we call it, a *great Rain*, especially having that remarkable adjunct following, *of his strength*. When the Lord promised to give *showres of Rain* for the asking (*Zach. 10. 1.*) he meant a plentiful strong Rain; by which also he intended to signifie the abundance of spiritual gifts and graces, which he would pour down upon the Church. So much for the opening of this verse, *For he saith to the Snow, be thou on the Earth, likewise to the small Rain, and to the great Rain of his strength*.

First, From the causal particle, *for*, which referreth to the former words, *God doth marveilous things which we cannot comprehend*,

וְשֶׁמֶט מִטָּוֶה
וְשֶׁמֶט מִטָּוֶה
וְשֶׁמֶט מִטָּוֶה
Et imbri plu-
viae & imbri
pluviarum po-
tentiae ejus.
Heb.
Imber est ag-
men caelestium
aquarum &
pluviarum.
Nonius.
Coacervatio
hæc nominum
et genitivum ille
pluralis vehe-
mentissimum
& procellosum
imbrem signifi-
cat. Merc.
Cum duo nomi-
na copulantur
idem sere signi-
ficantia quorum
posterius poni-
tur loco adjecti-
vi alterum de-
terminant. si
fuerit plura-
li numeri erit
superlativæ
significationis.
Bold.
Imber pluvia-
rum, quasi ex
multis pluviis
constans. Drusi.

hend, for, he saith to the Snow, and to the small Rain, &c.

Observe ;

The Snow and Rain are to be written in the Catalogue of Gods wonderful works.

What more common than Snow and Rain ? and yet, as common as they are, they have wonders in them. Some of the Ancients have observed many Wonders in the Snow, such as these.

First, That being in its own nature so extremely cold, yet it is formed in that part of the Air which is comparatively near the earth, and so hath more heat in it.

Secondly, That Snow being so exceeding cold, doth yet by Gods Command fall in some very hot Countries, even in the hottest of Sommer. Geographers tell us of Snow in many places of Tartary, which are extremely hot.

Plin. lib. 6.
cap. 32. Nat.
Histor.

Thirdly, they give this as a Wonder, That whereas it never Snows at all upon the Main Ocean, yet there is an Island spoken of by *Pliny*, called (*Nivaria* from *Nix*) *the Snow Isle*, which, though compassed with the Sea, is alwayes covered with Snow.

Fourthly, this is given as a Wonder, That Snow being so apt to melt by heat, yet Mount *Etna*, which is full of *Sulphur*, and casts out flames of fire continually, hath the Head of it hidden continually under or covered with a Cap of Snow.

Fifthly, That in some places VVorms are bred and live in the Snow of a fiery colour.

Sixthly, That the Snow, though it be very cold and chilling, hath in it a fecundating or sarning power, as to the earth, is also wonderful. Snow is a great cherisher and nourisher of Plants and Trees, of Corn and Grasse; and therefore *David* saith (*Psal. 147. 15, 16.*) *He giveth Snow like Wool, and heavy Frost like ashes.* There are three things considerable in Snow, for which it is compared to VVool. First, for the whiteness of it. Snow is white as VVool; Snow is so exceeding white, that the whiteness of a Soul cleanted by pardoning Grace, in the blood of Christ, is likened to it (*Isa. 1. 18.*) and the latter part of the same verse intimates, that the whiteness of Snow bears resemblance to that of VVool. The whiteness of Snow is caused by the abundance of

Air

Air and spirits that are in that pellucid Body, as the Naturalists speak: Any thing that is of a watery substance being frozen or much wrought upon by cold, appears more white. And hence it is that all persons inhabiting cold Climates or Countries, are of a whiter complexion than they who inhabite hot.

Causa est edina est Spiritus aerique copiu in corpore diaphano. Arist. lib. 2. de Mundo.

Secondly, Snow is like Wool for softness, 'tis as pliable to the hand, as a Lock or Fleece of Wool.

Thirdly, Snow is like Wool (which may seem strange) with respect to the warmth of it. Though Snow be cold in it self, as I said before, yet it is to the earth as Wool, or as a woollen cloth or blanket, that keeps the body warm. Snow is not warm formally, yet it is warm effectively and virtually, and therefore is it compared to Wool; and for that respect also the hoary Frost is said to be like ashes, in the same place of the *Psalms*: Ashes are warm, Frost is cold, yet that is a known expression, *burning cold*, that is, there is an effect in Frost, in the hoary Frost, of heat; things are kept warm by that which is contrary to warmth, *Frost and Snow*. Naturalists have beat their Brains, but can assign no satisfying reason of these things, and therefore we must ascribe them especially to the power and wisdom of God. These particulars laid together are a sufficient witness, that even Snow and Rain are to be reckoned with, and numbred among the wonderful works of God.

Ursus frigit. Prunum dici volum Grammatici quasi u- rnam, quod u- rat arbores & flores.

Hence Note, Secondly;
God can do what he will by a word speaking.

And as himself can do what he will by his word, so he can make the creature do what he will by his word. This goodly Fabrick of the World was made by his word, and all the creatures in the world will presently act upon a word from God (*Psal. 33. 9.*) *He spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast; Gods saying is doing.* This is a point of high consolation to all the people of God; what-ever their affliction is, God can command them out of it; what-ever their wants are, God can command a supply for them. He that saith to the natural Snow and to the Rain, to Stormes and Tempests, be ye upon the earth, can also say to the Snow and Rain, to the Stormes and Tempests of trouble, be ye not upon the earth; He can do or undo, by his word, as himself pleaseth. 'Tis also matter of great terror to all that rise up against, and disobey the word of the great God; for though they

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they see nothing at hand to interrupt them, nothing to check them in the way of their lusts, though they look upon themselves beyond the reach of danger, yet 'tis but a word speaking from God, and they are wrapt up in Snow, and hurrican'd with a Storm and Tempest; *He saith to the Snow, &c.* This irresistible force of a word from God, was noted also upon those words in the 9th Chapter (vers. 7.) *He commandeth the Sun and it riseth not.* The Sun will not appear, or it will hide it self in an Eclipse, or Cloud, and darken the whole earth, if God do but give a command.

Thirdly, take the point yet more strictly and restrainedly, as here in the text, *He saith to the Snow and to the Rain.*

Snow and Rain are at the command of God.

Monti i vide-
antur casibus
moverique ver-
bo Dei in omni
motu suo de-
serviunt. Quo
vult Deus illuc
ferunt nubes sive
pluviam sive
nivem, sive
grandinem por-
tat. August.
in Psal. 148.

(Psal. 147. 15, 16.) *He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth, his word runneth very swiftly;* that word refers to the particular matter in hand, as appeareth in the very next Verse, and the two which follow; *He giveth Snow like wool, he scattereth the hoar Frost like ashes, he casteth forth his ice like morsels, &c.* David applies the swift running of Gods word to these things; and how swiftly these run on his errands we may see (1 Kings 18. 44.) For whereas there had been no rain for three years & a half, according to the word of *Elijah* the Prophet, God did but say to the Rain, come, and it came; and though *Elijahs* Servant, at first, saw a very small appearance of it, only a Cloud like a mans hand, yet presently the whole heavens were masked over with Clouds, and there was a mighty rain, *The great rain of his strength. Rain, and Snow, and Vapours quickly fulfil his word* (Psal. 148. 8.) God is the Lord of hosts, and these creatures are his host, these as well as men and angels are his hosts (Psal. 34. 10.) *Who is this king of glory? the Lord of hosts is the king of glory;* and 'tis the great glory of God, that he hath such hosts at his command: None of the Princes or Powers of this world have any such; How long may they send their commands to the Snow before it will come, or to the Rain before they can get a drop of it! neither the one nor the other will stir at the command of man, but at the command of God they haste away.

And if when the Lord saith to the Snow and to the Rain, come, and they come, abide upon the earth, and they abide there, how will this reprove and condemn thousands of the children of men,

men, to whom the Lord speaks and speaks again and again, he sends out his commandment, and his word runs very swiftly to them, yet they stir not, they move not! Surely Snow and Rain will rise up in judgement against these, to whom the Lord hath said, *do this*, and they did it not, to whom the Lord hath said, *do not this*, yet they did it. The word represents all sorts of Creatures below man, as well as the Angels above man, readily obeying the command of God, to teach man how readily he should obey his commands, and how greatly he shall be condemned if he do not, and that not only by the Angels in heaven, but by the Snow and Rain that fall upon the earth.

Fourthly, From the distinction which is here made of the rain, the *small rain*, and the *great rain of his strength*,

Note;

In what degree or quantity soever the rain falls, it is by the special appointment of God.

If it be a small, gentle, soaking rain, it is because God hath spoken to the small rain to go; if it be a great, a violent, a smothering rain, a rain of his strength, it is because God hath said to the great rain, go: We are not to stick in second causes, but to have our hearts raised higher, both as to the rain it self, and to the proportions of it. *He maketh small the drops of rain*, as 'tis said at the 27th Verse of the former Chapter, and he can make great the drops of rain, or the drops of rain great; he can cast the rain into what mold he pleaseth, great or small; it shall be a sweetly-distilling rain, or it shall be, as *Solomon* speaks, a fiercely *sweeping rain* (Prov. 28. 3.) where he compares the poor man that oppresseth, to a sweeping rain. God hath sweeping rains, and as 'tis said (Ezek. 13. 13.) *overflowing showres* in his hand; and he sometimes sends, not a watering showre, not a refreshing or comforting showre in mercy, not a showre to enrich and fatten the earth, but an overflowing showre to drown the earth and destroy the fruits of it in his anger; and this is true, whether you take the showre properly, or metaphorically. If you take the showre properly for that which falls from heaven, he sends the refreshing, & he sends the overflowing showre; or if you take it metaphorically (a showre may signifie any kind or degree of judgement) he can send one judgement which shall be as small rain.

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and

and he can send another which shall be as great rain, as the rain of his strength, an overflowing showre : He can send forth (as that allusion is used, *Jer. 12. 5.*) *his footmen*, and he can send forth *his horsemen*, greater or lesser Judgments, as himself pleaseth ; he proportions and cuts them out according to his own infinite wilddome and righteous will.

Lastly, From these words, *He saith to the snow, abide on the earth, or be thou on the earth, stay there, and so to the rain,*

Observe ;

Snow or Rain continue or stay upon the face of the earth till God calls them off.

When he saith, be ye upon the earth, upon the earth they will be, until the same power that sent them, fetch them back again. These hosts are like a well ordered and well disciplined army, wherein Souldiers sent out by the order of their General or superior Officers, must stay at their post where they are appointed, they must abide, till called off, upon pain of death: Be thou there, saith the Commander to his Souldier, be thou there till I fetch thee off ; and when, after signal given, the battel begins, the Souldier never leaves charging or pursuing the enemy, till the trumpet sound a retreat. So 'tis in this case, God saith to the Rain, be upon the earth till thou hast wrought my purpose and done all my pleasure, and there it is.

Thus we see the efficacy of Gods command upon these Meteors, the Snow and the Rain ; now follow the effects, or what comes of it.

First, we have that effect which respects man ;

Vers. 7. *He sealeth up the hand of every man.*

He, That is, God,

Sealeth up the hand ;

Sealing, in Scripture, hath a threefold signification.

First, It notes the hiding of a thing, or the keeping of it secret and close ; that which is sealed, is also concealed (*Isa. 8. 16.*) *Bind up the Testimony, seal the Law among my disciples.* There is a time wherein God commands the Law to be sealed, and the Testimony to be bound up, and that is a very sad time ; for though there are various

Pro. ne claudere, occultare.

various apprehensions about the meaning of this command given the Prophet, yet the most probable intendment of it is, that God would not have him lose any more time in dealing with those faithless and profane scoffers of his message, but reserve those sacred mysteries, as secrets, to be communicated only to the faithful, who would with due reverence and faith religiously receive them. *Seal the Law among, or for my disciples*, that is, such as desire to learn, or have been taught and learned of me, and by learning are become spiritually skilful and learned, as the word is rendered (*Isa. 50. 4.*) Woe to sinners when the Testimony is bound and the Law sealed; which is the import (I conceive) of that place in the same Prophet (*Isa. 29. 11.*) And when in the *Revelation* (*Chap. 4. 1.*) a Book sealed with seven seals was shewed to John, he wept (*vers. 4.*) because *no man was found worthy to open, and to read the Book, &c.* implying, that the Book was full of divine secrets, hidden from the eyes or understandings of men, and so must have continued, if the *Lion of the Tribe of Judah*, the *Root of David*, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, had not prevailed to open the Book, and to lose the seven seals thereof. **Sealed things are hidden things.** Is not this (said the Lord, *Deut. 32. 34.*) *laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures?* That is, is it not kept close and hidden there? are not their cursed treasures of sin laid up among my righteous treasures of wrath? The Church (*Cant. 4. 12.*) is called, *a Fountain sealed*, because the waters by which she is refreshed and made fruitful are a hidden thing to the world, or because the Church must keep her self apart and distinct from the prophane and unbelieving world. That's one thing, we seal what we would hide or keep close.

Secondly, the word importeth sometimes, to finish or compleat a thing. When a Writing is perfected then we seal it, when a Letter is made up we seal it; to that purpose the word is used (*Dan. 9. 24.*) Where the Prophet speaking of Christs coming in the flesh, and what he should then do, saith, *He shall finish transgression*, that is, he shall compleat, by the sacrifice of himself, all the sacrifices for transgression. Christ had no hand in any transgression, as to the doing of it, but in this sence he finished all transgression; that is, he finished the sacrifices of atonement for transgression, that so our transgressions might not be charged upon us. Further, that word, as there used, may very well bear the first sence

sence of sealing ; *He shall seal transgression*, that is, he shall cover or hide our transgressions, for that is the effect of the Mediatorship of Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, To seal a thing is (in common sence) to confirm it (*Jer. 32. 10, 11.*) *I* (said the Prophet) *subscribed the Evidence and sealed it* ; that is, I confirmed it and made it good in Law. Now when 'tis said here, *He sealeth up the hand of every man*, I conceive we are to take it in the first sence, that is, he hideth or shuts up every mans hand. The hand is the chief instrument of working, and therefore to say, God shuts up or seals the hand, is an elegant Metaphor, signifying that God puts a stop or stay to, or that he takes men off from their work. If a mans hands be bound or sealed up he cannot use them.

But how doth God seal up the hand of every man, of every working man or labourer ? By the Snow and by the Rain, saith *Elihu* ; because when God sends abundance of Snow upon the earth, or when he sends the great Rain of his strength, men cannot work : in a deep snow, or in a great rain, without doors, Labourers are hindered from their labour : And hence anciently, Winter had this title given it, *dull or sluggish Winter* ; because in the extremity of winter weather, many men are forced to sit (as we say) with their hands in their pockets, or folded under their armes. *He sealeth up the hand of every man*, that is, by tempestuous and fowl weather, he bindes their hands and presseth them together as with a Seal.

The Hebrew is, *In the hand he will seal*, or, *sealeth every man*. From which strict reading, some have made a very impious interpretation of this Text, thereupon grounding that (as most use it) most unwarrantable Art of *Chiromancy*, as if God did put certain Lines, Prints, or Seals upon the hand of every man, from whence it may be collected and concluded, what (as some call it) his Fortune or Destiny will be in the world. Which, as it is an opinion wicked in it self, so altogether heterogeneous to this place, the tendency whereof is not to shew how things shall work with men hereafter, but how they are often hindered or stoppt in, or from their present work.

There is yet another reading of the place, thus, *He sealeth up every man with strength*. The word which we translate *hand*, they translate *strength*, and refer it to God ; he with strength, or by his

Hiems iners dicitur quod homines cogat desidere inopes & complicari manibus.

In manu omnes homines obfig-nabit. Mont.

כִּיד
Vehementia omnem hominem recludit.
Merc. pag.

his mighty power shuts up every man. The word *hand* may be rendred *strength*, because by the hand men act violently and put forth their strength. And God may be said to shew his strength in so soft and fluid a thing as snow and rain, that thereby he may give proof, now easily, or with how small a matter, in appearance, he can stop any man from his work and purpose. There is a truth in this reading, but I rather take the words as they stand in our translation, not as noting the hand or power of God sealing men, but Gods sealing the hands of men, putting them off from or besides their labour. Thus by Snow and Rain he sealeth or shuterth up the hand of every man; and why so? the reason is given in the next words,

That all men might know his work.

God by extraordinary Snowes and Raines stops men from their work. But what, Is it that they should be idle? No, but that *they may know his work.* Whose work?

Some understand it of mans own work; As if the meaning were this; God stops men a while from further or present work, that they may take a view of their past works; or he takes them off from their civil works and employments, that they may employ themselves in considering their moral works; as the Prophet admonished the Jews (*Isa. 1. 5.*) *Now therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, consider your wayes.* Another Prophet reproved them for the neglect of this duty (*Jer. 8. 6.*) *No man saith, what have I done?* The Lord often brings his people to hard sufferings that they may know their own doings or works. This is a profitable sense; yet I rather conceive that the work here intended is Gods work, and so I shall prosecute the words, *That all men may know his work.*

This work of God may be taken two wayes.

First, More strictly; thus God by rain shuts up the hands of men from their work, that they may know, those extraordinary stormes of Snow and Rain, which drive them in from their labour, and shut up their hands from working, are his special work. Great Snowes & Raines declare to all men the great power of God, who doth not only astonish men by terrible thunder and lightning, but can by Snow and Rain (his much weaker weapons) put them beside their purpose, and stop their work.

Secondly,

Secondly, Take his work more largely; God sealeth up the hands of men, that they having a vacancy from their own work may consider his; he doth as it were force them from what they were doing or intended to do, that so they may have leisure to take notice of what he hath done, *That all men may know his work.*

Hence note, First;

God can hinder or stop any man or all men in their work.

He, when, and as he pleaseth, can seal up the hand of every man. If God hath a mind to work, none can lett him (*Isa. 43. 13.*) Who can seal the hand of God? I may say also, whose hand cannot God seal? How easily did the Lord seal up the hand of the builders of Babel (*Gen. 11. 7.*) They were not upon a mighty work; but God by confounding their tongues, sealed their hands, and they (as 'tis said, *v. 8.*) *Left off to build the City.*

Secondly, When the text saith, *God sealeth up the hand of every man, that all men may know his work,*

Observe;

How diligent soever men are about their own works, yet they are slow enough, too slow to take notice of the works of God.

When the hand of God is lifted up some will not see it, they are not only backward to see it, but opposite to the seeing of it; and though others do not set themselves against, yet they do not set themselves to the knowledge of his works. *'Tis a great and common sin, our not studying to know the works of God; we should study the works of God as much as we do the word of God; we should study both his work of Creation, and his works of Providence, whether works of Mercy, or of Judgment; we should endeavour to know all his works.*

From the universality of the expression, *that all men may know his work,*

Note;

God would have all study this Book, the book of his works.

They whose business and labours lie in fields, the Plow-men and the Vine-dressers, he would have them know his works, as those

those special works of his, the Snow and the Rain, so his works in general. The meanest of men cannot excuse their ignorance of the works of God, seeing the Text and Point tell us, God drives them many times out of the field, home to their houses, and will not let them do a stroke of work more abroad, on purpose that they might know his work.

Hence note, Thirdly;

The aim and intendment of God in keeping us at any time from our work, is that we may know more of his works.

It is a great part of our wisdom to answer the designs of God in all his providences to us. We seldom think what God intends by a wet day, by a rainy day, by a tempestuous day, we little think the aim of God in calling us from our works, is to call us to the consideration of his work. Some men would never find a time to bestow their thoughts upon the works of God, if God did not take them off from their own work; they would never be at leisure, if he did not give them a leisure, a vacation time, and as here in this text, seal up their hand. God hath various wayes to take men off from the hottest pursuits of their own works; he takes many off from them by sickness, he binds them as prisoners to their beds; others are taken off from their own business by proper imprisonment, and restraint of liberty; and why? what is the reason of this? is it not that they may know his work, that they may well consider the dealings of God with them? *A sick bed is a School, and so is a Prison, where we should study both the Word and Works of God.* Let us remember, when ever God takes us off from our Callings by sickness, or restraineth our liberty by imprisonment, his gracious purpose is, that we may know his work. Possibly when we had liberty to go about our own work, we could find little, or would not find much leisure to meditate upon the works of God. Well, saith God, I see I must take you off from your works, else you will never be Students in mine. That's the effect of Snow and Rain, with reference to man, *He sealeth up the hand of every man, that all men may know his work.*

But here we have another effect, with respect to beasts.

Vers. 8. *Then the beasts go into dens, and remain in their places.*

פֶּה
Potius fera
quam bestia, a
vivacitate, non
eodem vox vi-
tam significat.
Drus.

ארב
Arab, a verbo
Arab, insidia-
ri. Et ingreditur
bestia in insi-
dias, i. e. in la-
ribula unde in-
sidiatur. Merc.

There are two words in the Hebrew which signifie bruits, or beasts. The word here used properly signifies *wild beasts*, the other tame beasts, such as are for our use, and brought up to our hand. The text intends the wild beasts, the beasts of the forrest, the beasts of prey, *they go into dens*, these seek shelter in snow time, or when the great rain of the strength of God falleth upon the earth. The Psalmist (*Psal. 104. 20.*) describes the beasts ordinarily going out of their dens when the night comes; *Then* (saith he) *all the beasts of the forrest go forth*. Here we have the beasts, whether night or day, driven to their dens by a storm, or by the Snow; then they go to their dens and places of shelter, or, as we speak, to *Covert*. The word rendred *Dens*, signifies a place of ambush, or of lying in wait; such are the dens of wild beasts; as it is said of the wicked (*Psal. 10. 9.*) *He lieth in wait secretly, as a Lion in his den, to catch the poor, &c.* It is this word. Such kind of retreats have the wild beasts, they have their dens, which are all o places to watch for their prey: And as they often go to their dens upon choice, or of their own accord, so they are sometimes driven to them (as in the text) for shelter against a storm. *Then the beasts go into dens,*

And remain in their places.

They not only *go into dens*, but there *they remain*, they keep home, the storm keeps them in. As when the flood of waters, the great rain of Gods strength, was upon the earth, *Noah* was shut into the Ark, and there he remained (*Gen. 7.*) he did not only go in, but stayed in till the flood was asswaged; so it is said here of the beasts, they remain in their places, they will not budge nor peep out till the storm be over.

Hence note, First;

The Providences of God in various seasons, affect the very beasts of the earth.

Those creatures which live only a life of sense, yet partake somewhat of reason, at least, they act according to reason; they are sensible of what God doth, though they know not that he doth it.

it. And is not this a great reproof to those, who are not only not sensible of, but slight those severer dispensations of God? how beast-like are those men, who have not so much sence of the dealings of God as the beasts have! who though they have a knowledge beyond bruits, yet they use their knowledge no better, no nor so well as bruits; and so they are either (as the Prophet saith) *brutish in their knowledge*, or as the Apostle Peter (2 Pet. 2. 12.) *They are as brut beasts (in humane shape) made to be taken and destroyed*. How can they avoid being taken and destroyed by the judgments of God, or as *Elihu* expresseth it, by the great rain of his strength, who take not so much notice of them, as to see their danger and get into a hiding place? For,

Secondly, When the beasts go into dens and remain in their places, what is it that moves them to it? Surely 'tis to be (as we say) out of harms way.

Hence note;

Every creature by the light of nature would get out of danger.

Great snowes and rains of strength are dangerous or grievous to beasts, therefore they avoid them; they will not stand in the open air while a storm lasts, if they can help it. Beasts will save themselves as well as they can; and if so, then take these two Inferences from it.

First, *For our instruction. We are sent to school by God himself more than once to the beasts and creeping things of the earth.* Solomon sends us to the Ant, a creeping thing, he bids us *consider her wayes, and be wise*. *Elihu*, in this text, sends us to the wild beasts of the earth, to Lions and Bares, to Tigers and Wolves, and bids us consider their wayes and be wise. Here is matter of instruction for us; What is that? *Get out of harmes way*, make haste out of danger; when the cold Snow comes, and the great Rain of the strength of God, take heed you be not found abroad without a shelter. Surely God who hath provided dens for the beasts, and places for those wilde creatures to hide themselves in, hath not left us without a niding-place, when the great rains of trouble fall, or threaten to fall. God invited his people of old, where to look for and whither to go for shelter in such a rainy day (*Isa. 26. 20.*) *Come my people, enter thou into thy Chambers, and shut thy door a-*

Q q q 2- bout

about thee; hide thy self as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be over-past. For, Behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the Inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. As if he had said, Hide your selves till the storm be over, till the great rain of my strength be gone. God, who hath put an instinct into the creatures to go to their dens, to their places in a stormy season, doth specially call to men, and among men, specially to his own people, when 'tis a time of indignation, to go into their Chambers and hide themselves till it be overblown. Do not stand out in the rain, do not stand in the storm, get into your chambers; what are these Chambers? surely not the chambers of our houses, they are poor refuges, the rain of his strength will break or soak into those chambers, how well soever roofed or ceiled. The chambers in which the people of God are called to hide themselves, are God himself; the Power of God, the Faithfulness of God, the Truth of God, the Goodness of God, in these Chambers he calls his people to hide themselves. Solomon assureth us (*Prov. 81. 10.*) The Name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe. As God hath taught the beasts to run into their dens, so he instructs us in his Word to run into his Name, as to a strong tower, where we may be safe. David said (*Psal. 57. 1.*) Under the shadow of thy Wings shall be my refuge until this calamity be over-past; That is, I will put my self under thy protection, while the stormy showers last. The Hen gathereth her young ones under her wings; so would Christ the Jewish Nation, both for comfort and safety, and they refused him; What followed? The next verse tells us, Desolation. What could save them when the Roman Eagle spread her wings against them, who would not come under the wing of Jesus Christ! (*Matth. 23. 37.*) 'Tis not any worldly refuge, not any arm of flesh, but the shadow of the Lords wings that can hide us in an evil day from the evil of the day. They who get and keep close to God by Faith, need not fear the worst stormes which this world can raise against them.

And hence, let sinners in general take warning; suppose you should live all your days in this world without a storm, I mean, without any outward trouble, yet remember, there will be a stormy day, the day of the great rain of the strength of God will come, he will rain down vengeance upon all the ungodly in that day; Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and

an horrible tempest in that day (Psal. 11. 6.) Therefore see that you have a refuge against that day, when many shall (as it is said, Rev. 6.) *Call to the rocks, hide us, and to the mountains, fall upon us, cover us from the presence of him that sits on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.* Although we should have prosperity or fair weather as long as we live in this world, yet there is a day of wrath coming; be not then to seek of a hiding place, which is only to be had in and by Jesus Christ; **He is the man chiefly intended by the Prophet (Isa. 32. 3.) That shall be a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest. If you are without him in that day, you stand naked to the wrath of God, and that will quickly soak into you, or sink you for ever.**

Secondly, As the beasts going to their dens for shelter, may instruct us, so it may reprove and upbraid us, and it will be at last a dreadful reproof, upon all that are backward in this thing, to provide themselves of a Covert against the Storm. The *Jews* (as hath been formerly toucht) were upbraided with the *Crane*, the *Turtle*, and the *Swallow*, because they knew the time of their coming (Jer. 8. 7.) They knew when such a Countrey would be unfit, or unsafe for their stay, and therefore they removed to places more comfortable to, and commodious for them: But (saith he) *my people know not the judgement of the Lord.* As if he had said, my people have not so much wit or fore-cast as the Crane, and the Swallow, they know not what is good and safe, much less, what is best and safest for themselves; let it snow and rain never so fast, either they stand it out and out-dare it, or they seek such coverts from it, as cannot be a covering to them.

'Tis said, the very Vermin, Mice and Rats, will (by a natural presage) come out of a house that is ready to fall. They are more senseless than Mice or Rats, who hasten not to a place of safety, when they perceive the foundation of that sinful State wherein they stand, sinking, and the walls cracking on every hand. How faithless then are they, how presumptuous and senseless who hasten not out of *Babylon*, when they hear the Scriptures of truth saying not only that *Babylon shall fall, or is falling*, but, as of a thing already done and past, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen!* Is it not dangerous to stay in a falling house, in a house which shall so certainly fall, that 'tis said, and said again, *'tis fallen, 'tis fallen.* O take heed of a hard heart when you hear of a falling house, or of a storm ready

to

to fall upon your heads. When God threatned *Pharaoh* to bring a storm of hail upon the land of *Egypt* (that was indeed a rain of his strength) a mighty rain of hail, the text saith (*Exod. 9. 20.*) *He that feared the word of the Lord amongst the servants of Pharaoh, made his servants and his cattel flee into the houses; but they whose hearts were hardned, let them stay abroad, and so they perished.* Sinners, you hear of a worse storm of hail threatned than that which fell upon *Egypt*, even the great rain of the strength of the Lords wrath, revealed from heaven against you; shall the beasts in such a day of distress go into dens, and remain in their places, and do you think to abide the day of the Lords terrible coming? Do you think to stand it out when he appeareth? The Prophet foreshewing the day of Christs first coming in frail flesh, said (*Mal. 3. 2.*) *Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiners fire, and like fullers sope.* Now if the day of Christs first coming was such as sinners could not abide, when he came only with refining fire to fetch out the dross of their sins, and purge away their corruptions, shall sinners (impenitent and unbelieving sinners I mean) presume that they shall be able to abide or endure that day of his second coming, when he shall come with consuming fire to punish and take vengeance on them for their sins! Away with these vain confidences, which (as the Prophet told the *Jewes*, *Jer. 2. 37.*) *the Lord will certainly reject, and in which you can never prosper, and go into those holes of the rock, the wounds of a crucified Saviour, in which, and in which only, you may be safe and saved for ever, from the Snow and great Rain of Gods strength, the power of his anger, which none know at present (Psal. 90. 11.) but all must feel, who are not sheltered from it by Jesus Christ, who delivereth us from the wrath to come (1 Thes. 1. 10.)*

JOB, Chap. 37. Vers. 9, 10, 11.

9. Out of the South cometh the Whirlwind, and cold out of the North.

10. By the breath of God Frost is given; and the breadth of the Waters is straitned.

11. Also by watering he wearieth the thick Cloud: he scattereth his bright Cloud.

Elihu having spoken of Thunder and Lightning, as also of Snow and Rain, with their effects upon man and beast, at the 6th, 7th and 8th verses last opened, he in the 9th and 10th verses speaks of the Winds, with their effects; first, Cold; Secondly, Frost: or, first, of the VVind; secondly, of the Cold; and thirdly, of the Frost; and then at the 11th verse, of the wonderful works of God in disposing and dispersing the water in the Clouds, for the refreshing of the earth by Rain in its season.

In the 9th and 10th verses (I say) he discourseth of the Winds; and though there be four Cardinal or principal VVinds, the East, VVest, North and South, which are subdivided into thirty-two VVinds according to the Mariners Compass, yet here Elihu treats by name of two VVinds only, the South-VVind, and the North-VVind; which two are often and eminently spoken of in Scripture; which two, as they come from directly contrary Points in the Heavens, so they produce contrary effects, famously known among men, on earth. And therefore, I conceive, Elihu gives instance only about them, as being more generally taken notice of.

Vers. 9. Out of the South cometh the Whirlwind, &c.

The word which we render *the South*, properly signifieth a Chamber, an inner Room, or secret place, a Chamber within a Chamber, which is the most private, retiring Room or Chamber. Gen. 43. 30. Judg. 16. 9. 2 Sam. 13. 10. 1 Kings 20. 30. Cant. 3. 4. VVesay, Out of the South, &c. And the Reason why the South is expressed by that word which signifieth a secret Chamber, is, because the South Pole is situate or placed in the most

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Cubiculum interius, penetrale; orne quod in intimis partibus est.

Polus Antarcti-
cus occidit uia
nobis, utpote
depressus sub
nostro Hori-
zonte, secundum
quantitatem qua
Polus Arcticus
super Hori-
zontem elevatur.
Aquin.
ἐκ ταυίνων
ἐπερχέσθαι
τὸν ἀνέμον.
E promptuariis
superueniunt
doloris. Sept.

Redeamus na-
benignitate ab
exilio et capti-
uitate, ea cele-
ritate, quae turbo-
nem et procel-
lam erumpunt ab
australi plaga.
Bold.

most secret part of the VWorld, as to them who inhabit Northern Climates; they who live nearest the North Pole, are farthest removed from the South. And as the same word in the Hebrew Tongue signifieth the South and an inner Chamber, so at the 9th Chapter of this Book (*vers. 9.*) we read of the Chambers of the South. The Septuagint render, *He bringeth the Wind, or Whirlwind, out of his Cellar.* Cellars or Store-houses being secret places, and removed out of sight, for the keeping of Goods and VVares that are laid up there; and it is elegantly expressed, that VVinds come out of Store-houses, as if God did lay them up, till he hath occasion to draw them forth, and use them.

Some render it by a general word, *Out of a secret place cometh the Whirl-wind.*

VVe say best, *Out of the South*; First, because it is expressly opposed to the North in the Text; Secondly, because Southern VVinds are the strong st and most vehement VVinds, as the Northern are the coldest. For though we find by experience, that strong VVinds blow from all Quarters of Heaven, yet usually the South brings forth the strongest VVinds; and therefore in Scripture a sudden and violent VVind is called a VVhirl-wind out of the South. VVhen the Prophet would describe an unavoidable coming of Judgment, he saith (*Isa. 21. 1.*) *As Whirlwinds in the South pass through, so it cometh &c.* And again (*Zech. 9. 14.*) *The Lord God shall blow the Trumpet, and shall go with Whirlwinds of the South.* Both places expressing it, according to what was most usually and commonly known, great VVinds coming out of the South. That place (*Psal. 126. 4.*) is rendered by some (not as we, *Turn again our Captivity, O Lord, as the Streams in the South,* but) *Turn again our Captivity, as Storms or Whirlwinds in the South.* The Church prayed that God would make some sudden change of things, like that made by Southern Storms and VVhirlwinds. Yet we are not to understand it, as if all Southern VVinds were VVhirlwinds or tempestuous; favourable refreshing VVinds come from thence sometimes, as may be collected from the 17th verse of this Chapter, and from Canticles the 4th, verse the 16th, and as is expressed (*Acts 27. 13.*) *The South Wind blew softly.* So that *Elihu* speaks of what is often and usually done, not of what is alwayes done, when he saith, *Out of the South cometh*

The

The Whirlwind.

That's wind with an addition, a *Whirlwind* is more than an ordinary wind. Wind is one of those Meteors, which God the Author of Nature hath provided for the use of man: It is called by one of the Ancients, the *agitation or flux of the Air*. Much might be spoken about the natural causes and matter of winds, but I shall not insist upon that. A *VVhirlwind* is a tempestuous wind; the Greeks have a special word for it, and so have the Latines, both importing violence, or that which troubles and turns all upside down, and throweth every thing out of its place: Such a boysterous thing is the *VVhirlwind*, 'tis a tossing, tumbling, breaking, disturbing wind; this *VVhirlwind*

טורבן
Turbo, a Greek
is τὸ πᾶν a
Plinio vortex
vocatur.
Ventus est Ae-
ris fluxus seu
agitatio.
Damasc. l. 2.
de Orisod. filo.
c. 8.

Cometh out of the South.

It cometh. A like or the same expression is applied to the Sun, (*Psal. 19. 3.*) *He hath set a Tabernacle for the Sun, which is as a Bridegroom coming out of his Chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a Race.* As the Sun cometh every morning out of his Chamber by Gods appointment; so doth the *VVhirlwind* at special times appointed by God. 'Tis fitly said such fierce and unruly winds *come forth*, for they are as it were kept fast in prison till God takes off their Bonds, and opens their Prison-dore, and then out they come furiously and boysterously, to do the work God hath commanded and designed them to. *Out of the South cometh the Whirlwind.*

VVhen Elihu saith, The *VVhirlwind*, the great *VVind* cometh out of the South, he doth not express, yet in imares, who it is that brings the *VVhirlwind* out of the South: The *VVhirlwind* cometh, but it doth not come before it is sent. The scope of *Elihu* all along is, to shew the mighty power of God in ordering and disposing the Meteors, and among them, these mighty winds.

Hence Note;

Winds come at Gods appointment.

He is the Author of them, he is the disposer of them, he rules their most unruly motions. The Heathen Poets feign'd a god of the winds, whom they called *Aeolus*, who was P'eturd or S'a'ued puffing the winds out of his mouth. But 'tis *Jehovah* who ha-

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the winds in his power, the winds and the Whirlwind. Neither the Heathen god *Aeolus*, nor the god of this World the Devil, nor the Devils of this World, VVitches and Conjurers, have any power of their own over the least breath of wind, either to raise or lay it. *Agar* describing the Excellency of God, both in himself and in his working, saith among other things (*Prov. 30. 4.*) *He gathereth the wind in his Fist*; implying, that God hath the winds in his hand, even as a man carryeth a thing in his hand, or holdeth it in his Fist, keeping it there, or letting it out at pleasure or as he listeth. (*Psal. 135. 7.*) *He bringeth the Wind out of his Treasure*. We read the same in the Prophet (*Jer. 10. 13. Jer. 5. 1, 16.*) These Treasures out of which God brings the wind, some call the Secrets of Nature, or secret natural Causes; but I conceive 'tis an allusion to the Customs of men, who lay up things useful in private places, that they may have them at hand when occasion calls: Christ teacheth us, in imitation of them, to get and keep by us such Treasures of saving Truth (*Math. 13. 52.*) To be sure, God hath the winds ready, he hath a store and stock of them, which upon any occasion he can bring forth.

God makes a twofold use of the winds, or, there are two general purposes, for which he brings them out of his Treasures. First, for good; Secondly, for hurt to the VVorld: First, in Mercy; Secondly, in Judgment.

First, God brings them forth out of his Treasures in a way of Mercy, and for good to Mankind. And there is a sixfold good or good use, for which God brings the winds out of his Treasure.

First, to cleanse and purge the Air; therefore, by some, the winds are called *The Brooms of Heaven*. VVhen the Air is corrupt and foul, God sweepeth it by these Brooms. And we find, when Judgment is threatned, a negative is put upon the wind as to this use, (*Jer. 4. 11.*) *A dry wind of the High Places of the Wilderness, toward the Daughter of my people, not to fan or to cleanse, &c.* Implying that one merciful use of the winds, is to fan and to cleanse the Air, as Corn is fanned and cleansed.

Secondly, God brings the winds out of his treasure to temper the Air. VVhen the Air is cooled by a gentle Breeze, we count it a mercy in hot seasons. And such is the goodness of God, that in those places where the heat is most troublesome, there are many cool Breezes. We read (*Gen. 3. 8.*) *of the cool of the day,*

or

*Venti Aquilona-
res dicuntur
secundum calidum,
quod reddunt
serenum mun-
dum. Vatabl:*

or (as the Margin hath it) *the wind of the day*, implying that the extreame heat of the day is usually allwaged and cooled by the wind. The Prophet (*Jer. 14. 6.*) describing a time of drought, saith, *The wild Asses did stand in the high places, they snuffed up the wind like Dragons.* To snuffe the wind in time of drought, is a great refreshing; wind refresheth the body as well as food, and 'tis some refreshing in famine, or want of food.

Thirdly, The wind is a *Rain-bringer*. We say when the wind riseth there will be rain. Thus (*1 Kings 18. 45.*) before the mighty rain which *Elijah* foretold, we read of a wind; *The Heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain.* When *Elisha* told those three Kings distressed for want of water, *Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain, yet that valley shall be filled with water* (*2 Kings 3. 17.*) he thereby implied, that wind is the ordinary fore-runner of rain. We, indeed, translate (*Prov. 25. 23.*) *The North wind driveth away the rain;* yet we put in the Margine, *The North wind bringeth forth the rain.* It is true of both; the wind scattereth and driveth away the rain, the wind also bringeth rain.

Fourthly, The wind causeth vegetables to flourish. A sweet gale of wind is not only good for man and beast, but for the grasse, and for the herbs, for plants and trees, the blowing of the winds maketh them flourish; in allusion unto which the Church speaks (*Cant. 4. 16.*) *Awake, O North wind, and come thou South, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out;* that is, that my Graces, my faith in thee, my love to thee, &c. may put forth and appear. The spiritual wind, the breathings of the Spirit, draw forth spiritual fruit from the heart, and in the life of believers, as the natural draws forth the natural fruits of the Earth.

Fifthly, The winds are beneficial and helpful for the drying up of the waters, they make the earth clean as well as the air. It is said (*Gen. 8. 1.*) after the whole world was drowned, *God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged.* The wind is a dryer as well as the Sun.

Sixthly, There is a great use of the winds, as to artificials. What mighty things are done by the wind? By it, Mills are turned to grin'd Corn at Land, and Ships are moved to carry both Men and Merchandize at Sea; there were hardly any passing from Nation to Nation, far dis-joynd by water, but by the advantage or help of winds; by the help of winds Merchants bring treasure

and precious things from one end of the earth to the other. These and many more are the common benefits of the winds, for which the Lord brings them out of his treasures.

Secondly, The winds have their evil effects, God sends them sometimes for a plague, or in a way of Judgment.

First, Winds often infect the air; the Lord can send, as a cleansing, so a corrupting wind.

Secondly, As wind brings rain, so it hinders or blows away the rain.

Thirdly, The Lord sends the wind to break and overthrow all that stands before it. What doth not the whirlwind overthrow? Houses and Trees at Land are blown down; Goodly Ships at Sea, richly laden, have been sunk and over-set by tempestuous winds. God sent a whirlwind out of his treasure, which caused the Mariners in *Jonah* to cast their Merchandize into the Sea, and *Jonah* himself too. What cross and tempestuous winds did the Apostle *Paul* meet with in his voyage to *Rome* (Acts 27.)

Further, That the Lord bringeth the winds out of his treasure, is matter of great comfort to all that have an interest in the Lord; He can command the winds for them, and against their enemies; the wind cometh out of his Chamber, and it shall do as he commandeth. It is said (*Nahum* 1. 3.) *The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind, and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet*: That is, he ruleth whirlwinds, he walks in and works by the whirlwind, and by storms. And as we may take it properly, so metaphorically; that is, in the most tempestuous dispensations and providences, when the world is, as it were, in an Haricane, as boisterous winds in some places are called. In the greatest concussions and confusions, whether of things or persons, the Lord carrieth on his work in a regular course. As the great tossings of the air by natural winds, so the greatest tossings of affairs by the strong and various passions of mens spirits in the world (which we may call civill winds, yea whirlwinds) are under the ordering of divine power and wisdom. The Prophet (*Isa.* 17. 13.) admonisheth the wicked to take heed and give glory to God: *For (saith he) the Nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters; But God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaffe of the mountaines before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.* *A rolling thing*

thing is unsteadfast at all times, and a whirlwind will make that
roll and tumble which is very steadfast; it maketh Trees to shake,
it maketh strong Towers tremble: Now if the whirlwind causeth
things that are fixed and strong to shake and move, what will it
do to those that are light and unfixed, *rolling things*! That which
is (as men judge) fixt and steady as a Rock, *shall be as a rolling
thing before the whirlwind* of the Lords displeasure. The Margin
of our Bibles calls this *rolling thing*, *Thistle-down*. We know what
the down of a Thistle is, which at some seasons of the year falls
off, and is the lightest thing imaginable. When there is not a
breath of wind stirring, the Thistle-down will stir, roll, and move
from place to place; what then, think you, will become of Thistle-
down before a mighty wind, a whirlwind? The wicked shall be as
Thistle-down before the whirlwind; but the people of God
need not fear, for (as 'tis said of the Sea, so of the wind) *his way
is in it*, he rules the proper, and he rules the metaphorical whirl-
winds, which toss and tumble the state and affaires of this world.
To close this matter,

We may take notice of several wonderfull things in and about
the wind; and because *Elihu* ranks this among the great works of
God, who *doth marvellous things which we comprehend not*, not
only in Thunder and Lightning, in Snow and Rain, but in the winds,
therefore I will reckon up seven wonders which peculiarly con-
cern the winds.

First, This is considerable, That there is scarce any Country
but breeds some wind or other, which blows most there, and ex-
erciseth a peculiar force upon it; these are called *Provincial
Winds*. The North-west wind (saith *Plinie*) is proper to the *A-
thenians*, other parts of *Greece* having little acquaintance with it.
The North-east wind afflicts *Calabria*. And that several other
winds, are congenial to other Countries, whereof some are be-
nigne and favourable, others vexatious and uncomfortable to them,
may be seen in the Authors quoted in the Margin.

Secondly, 'Tis a wonder that the same wind in one Country
causeth fair weather, in another rain and storms.

Thirdly, That the same wind is in one place very healthy, and
in another causeth sickness by corrupting the air, and so the blood
and spirits of men. A learned Author saith, *when-ever the South
wind bloweth in such a Country or City, the people fall sick.*

Fourthly, c. 5.

*Nulla propema-
dum regio est,
que aliquem
ventum ex se
Nascentem, &
circa se eaden-
tem non habe-
at. Sen: l. 5.
Natur: quest.
c. 17.
Plin: l. 1.
cap. 47.
In insula Lesbos
Oppidum My-
tilene magnifi-
ce ædificatum
est, sed impru-
denter possum,
quod in ea civi-
tate cum Aus-
tus, homines
ægroarent.
Vitru: l. 1.*

Fourthly, That's also observable, that some winds are hot and dry, others cold and moist, according to the temperature of the places from whence they come, and thorough which they passe to us.

Fifthly, 'Tis marvellous that in some parts of the world, the wind blows constantly one way; such are called *trade winds*. Expert Sea-men know where to fetch a wind, when once they get to such a poynt they never miss it. The *Etesian* winds are famously known in History, blowing out of the East or North-east yearly at one time, for the space of forty dayes together; these *Cicero* called *Anniversary winds*.

Sixthly, Yet in most places nothing is more unconstant than the wind; inconstancy it self is Embleamed by the winds. No man knoweth when or where to have them certain for an houre; Hence we say, *Take the Wind while it serveth. Wind and tyde tarry for no man.*

Seventhly, That's also wonderfull, That winds blow at once from contrary poynts, North and South, &c. at the same time. *Daniel* (Chap. 7. 2.) saw in a vision the *four Winds striving together upon the Sea*; All the winds were let loose together, contending (as it were) for victory. Naturalists dispute and question whether contrary winds can blow at once; *Aristotle*, the great Philosopher, affirms they cannot, because (saith he) the one must needs beat back the other. That's true; yet, what hinders but that for a time there may be such a conflict or battel fought between them, as may extreemly trouble both the air and waters, and shake vehemently such things as stand in their way on earth? The Natural Historian reports, That two considerable Cities in the *Corinthian Bay*, were suddenly swallowed up by the Sea, which inundation was caused by the fierce blowing of the North and South wind at one and the same time. *Out of the South cometh the whirlwind,*

And cold out of the North.

The Hebrew is out of the scattering or fanning Winds cometh cold; Mr Broughton renders, *And cold from the faire weather-quilonares, qui Winds.* Our translation determines it.

Cold

Arist: l. 2.
Met: c. 6.

Plin: l. 2.
cap: 92.

ממורים
A radice
eventitare dis-
pergere. Per
ventos disper-
gentes intelli-
guntur venti a-
quilonares, qui
dispergunt nu-
bes, et acrem
ventilant.

Cold out of the North.

Common experience teacheth us, that the Northern coasts are cold, yea the coldest coasts: The coldest freezing winds come out of the North, as the strongest out of the South. Here is North and South, and here are the several effects of them; the South breaths warmth, and the North cold.

*Boreas a spiritus
græcus dicitur
quia gignit
a spiritus fere-
nitatem. Ho-
nier; Odysse.*

Hence Note;

Cold comes at Gods call.

Now the South wind bloweth, and then 'tis warme, anon the North wind blows, and then 'tis cold. God hath his special store-houses for heat and cold, he brings cold out of his Northern store-house, and not only heat but whirlwinds out of his store-house in the South. Cold is disposed of by God as heat is, sometimes for

the good, sometimes for the hurt of the creature. Cold is both needfull and hurtfull; cold is needfull to the body of man, and cold is needfull to the body of the earth; therefore God hath that in his treasure to serve the uses of man with. Changes from heat to cold, set forth, First, Gods power; Secondly, His care: If the air were kept alwayes at one rate, or in the same temper, neither windy nor stormy, neither very hot nor very cold, we possibly would like it better, but it would be worse for us. Changes in the air are so usefull, that nature could not be well preserved without them; we would have all things alike, we would have it alwayes warme weather, alwayes faire, but God seeth 'tis best for us, there should be changes in natural things for our natural good. It is also best for our spiritual good to have providential changes. God seeth it needfull to leave us sometimes under clouds and darkness, to bring cold as well as heat out of his treasures, to send us chilling times as well as springing times; cold is as good for our inner man as heat, stormes as calmes, foule weather as faire.

Now for a season (saith the Apostle, 1 Pet. 1. 6.) if need be ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations. The coldness of the

air kills the weeds in our grounds, so doth the cold of affliction and tribulation the weeds of corruption in our souls. Seasonable cold makes trees and plants more fruitfull in their seasons: The cold nipping frosts of affliction, dispose our souls (through the blessing of God) to a gracious fruitfulness in every good word

and

*Frigora tempe-
stiva arborum
et plantarum
conferunt fe-
cunditati.*

Garcin Meteor.

and work. We would alwayes have it spring and Sun-shine, peace and safety, but God knows it must be otherwise; perpetual shining and faire seasons are reserved for Heaven. While we are on Earth the cold of adversity is as advantageous to our spiritual condition, as the coldness of the air is to our natural. *Out of the South cometh the whirlwind, and cold out of the North.*

Vers. 10th. *By the breath of God frost is given, and the breadth of the waters is straitened.*

In the former part of this verse, we have the supream cause of frost, and in the latter an effect of it. *By the breath of the Lord frost is given*, or, *he giveth frost by his breath*. The Hebrew is active, we translate passively.

By the breath of the Lord.

*Flans deo, i.e.
deo ipsum flatus
causante.*

*A verbo dei
dat Gelu.
Chald: pro a
voluntate dei
dat gelu, sc:
Arcturus.*

That is, God breathing or blowing; not that the Lord useth breathing or blowing properly, he is a Spirit: But the Lord is said to breath or blow when he commands the wind to blow or breath. The winds are called Gods breath, or spi it. Some of the Hebrew Doctors, understand nothing else but his bare will and command, or the intimation of his mind to have it so; but I rather take it for the frost-making winds which are sent by God. *By the breath of the Lord*, that is, when the Lord appoynts and orders cold winds to come out of his treasure, when the Lord gives out the word of command, cold winds issue forth, and then frost appears. David affirms in general, (*Psal. 33. 6.*) *By the word of the Lord were the Heavens made, and all the Host of them by the breath of his mouth*. The Heavens and their Hosts, all the powers and vertues of them, all the influences and efficacies of them are given out by the breath of the Lord. And among other things that are given *by the breath of the Lord*

Frost is given.

Frost is cold in excess, frost is great cold; every cold is not freezing cold. The word which we render *frost*, is often ended *ice*, and it cometh from a root which signifieth *to make bald* because frost and ice cover the grasse (which is to the ground as haire to the head of man) and so make the surface of the Earth smooth like a bald head. Frost also makes the surface of the Earth, not only smooth,

smooth, but bright and shining like a bald head. *By the breath of the Lord frost is given.*

Hence Note;

Frost is the gift or dispensation of God.

Changes in the air, as well as changes in the estates, lives, or hearts of men, are from the Lord (*Psalm. 147. 17.*) *He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes: He casteth forth his ice like morsels; who can stand before his cold?* It is Gods ice and his cold as well as his rain or his Sun-shine. When the Psalmist saith, *He scattereth the frost, he casteth forth his ice,* he saith the same thing in substance which *Elihu* doth here, *By the breath of the Lord frost is given:* There is a continuall dependance of all creatures in their motions and operations, as well as in their beings, upon the will of God, 'tis by his word that frost is given. Some deny the working of the first cause with the second causes, any otherwise than as God once gave them a working power, and conserveth that power once given them. Whereas indeed God hath not only given a general power to the creature, not only hath he said, *There shall be frost sometimes, and heat sometimes, and fair weather sometimes,* but when-ever the heat or cold or frost come, they come by a particular order from him. As all things, men especially, have their being in him, so their working and moving from him; and that not only because he makes us in general, working, moving creatures, but as to every special work and motion. This the Prophet asserts, while he puts those reprovings questions (*Isa. 10. 15.*) *Shall the axe boast it self against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnifie it self against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake it self against them that lift it up, or as if the staffe should lift up it self, as if it were no wood.* Living and natural creatures move no more without God, than artificial and liveless instruments (such as the axe and saw, the rod and staff) can move themselves without the hand or help of man. *By the breath of the Lord frost is given,*

And the breath of the water is straitned.

This is an effect of the former. Frost drinks up the waters, and so straitens them: some define ice, which is made by the frost, *Glacies est co-*
to be store of water in a little room, or narrow compasse. Every years *piæ aquæ in*
angustia
experi-

experience tells us, that the waters are pinched with the frost. Waters which were out before a frost, are fetcht in or contracted by the frost; hence 'tis said (*Chap. 38. 30.*) *The waters are hid as with a stone*, which is of the same sence with this expression, *The breadth of the water is straitned*; God brings the waters into their old bounds, or into narrower bounds than before, by frost. From this effect of frost, that the breadth of the water is straitned by it,

Note;

Cold is a straitner.

'Tis so in natural things, 'tis so also (to mind the reader of that occasion'd this note) in spirituals and morals. *Take coldness as it is an ill disposition, or an indisposition upon the heart, it straitens us, as to the doing of any good*; for, as Christ hath foretold us (*Mat. 24. 12.*) that *because iniquity shall abound (in the latter dayes) the love of many shall wax cold*: So when-ever love or zeal, or any grace in us waxeth cold, piety, in all the acts or whole compass of it, will certainly decline and be straitned. He that before had a large heart, becomes narrow-hearted, and is pinched in his spirit by this sinful coldness. Warmth enlargeth, Cold straiteneth. God sends the cold of afflictions upon many bad men, to straiten their Lusts, else they would keep no bounds, they would overflow all; and it is the great design of Satan to send a cold upon, or to freeze the spirits of all good men, that they may be straitened and made unfit for the service of God. *Take heed of a coldness in your disposition, for that will be a straitner of your graces*; but welcome the frost of affliction, that may be a straitner of your corruptions. There is nothing we should fear more (except the loss of them, and the favour of God with them) than to feel our graces straitened; nor is there any thing (except the favour of God) which we should more desire, than to feel our lusts and corruptions weakned and abated.

Et rursus latissime funduntur aquae. Volg
Ego consense-
rim illi qui
participium
psal

Some render this latter part of the verse not as we, *The breadth of the waters is straitned*; but, *The waters are dissolved into their breadth*. As if *Elihu* had said, the ice or frost being dissolved, the waters return to their wonted latitude. The word rendred *straitened*, may be derived from a root which signifies to *dissolve*, to melt and pour out. Thus, as according to our translation, we take the

the latter part of the verse as an effect of the first, frost being that whereby the breadth of the waters is straitened; so according to this translation, it stands in opposition to the former, *By the breath of the Lord frost is given, and he again* (by his breath) *dissolveth the water.* Thawing as well as freezing is from God. Thawing is the melting of the ice; as metall is melted in the fire, so ice is melted by the heat of the Sun. Thus the North makes ice, and the South unmakes or melts it. The power of God is to be seen in dissolving those huge rocks and mountains of ice into water, as well as in congealing those mighty floods of water into icy rocks. David celebrateth the power of God in this also (*Psal. 147. 18.*) *He sendeth out his word, and melteth them* (that is, the morsels of ice spoken of *vers. 17.*) *He causeth the wind* (a warm thawing wind) *to blow, and the waters flow,* that is, those waters which were bound up by the cold, flow away by heat. Some insist much upon this translation. It is of the Lord that the waters are enlarged or straitened, frozen or dissolved. I leave it with the Reader which to pitch upon (both are safe and honourable to God) and proceed to the next verse.

Vers. 11. *Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud, he scattereth his bright cloud.*

There is a four-fold reading or exposition of the former part of this verse; *By watering he wearieth the thick cloud.*

First, thus, *For watering, or, that he may water the earth, he wearieth the thick cloud,* that is, he calleth up so much vapour as burdens or wearieth the thick Cloud, that he may have sufficient for the watering of the earth by rain. God causeth his vapour to ascend, saith the Prophet (*Jer. 10. 13.*) that is, he draws up much water by vapors, as the matter of clouds, or as the matter out of which clouds are made, and he fills the cloud so full of water, that it can scarce bear the weight; and all this he doth for the plentiful watering of the earth.

Secondly thus, *He causeth the cloud to give out, or spend its water till it be weary.* We say of any thing that is spent to the last, it is tired and wearied. Thus the Lord by watering wearies the thick cloud, commanding the clouds to pour rain upon the earth, till they are tired, till they have spent all their store, and cannot

SSI 2

yeeld

non aridum vel angustum, sed fufum aut salutum potius redunt. Sic aquiloni facultatem efficiendi gelu, Austro liquandi & fundendi attribuit.
Bold.

Vox 117 composita est praepositione וְ et nomine יָרַו quo significatur irrigatio, a verbo יָרַו irrigare. Pile.

Cum tempus irrigandi terram est cogit & condensat nubes ita quod magna aquarum copia gravida efficiat. Inde apud Hometum. νεφέλαι γεταρτος, i. e. nubium congregatur super. Bold.

Mercerus.

yeeld a drop more. Yet because to water the earth is the most proper and natural business of the cloud, therefore,

Thirdly, A learned Expositor conceives, that the cloud is not wearied by watering or raining upon the earth; but that on the contrary the cloud is said to be wearied or troubled, when, while it is about that work, it is scattered or dispersed by the Sun or Wind.

Fourthly, Others refer this wearying of the cloud, to the command which it receives for the watering of very remote parts of the earth. The Lord saith to this or that cloud, remove far off, go and water such a Countrey (it may be a hundred, yea, many hundred miles off the place from whence the vapours were exhaled), and there disburden thy self, or fall down in showres. When the Lord sends the cloud a long journey, we may say, 'tis even wearied, as a man or beast is that hath gone a long journey.

Frumentum desiderat nubes.

Vulg.

Cibus arborum imber est. Plin.

l. 17. cap. 2.

I shall not trouble the reader with that wide interpretation of the Latine translator, rendring thus, *The cloud desires corn, or the cloud labours for corn*, that is, to make the earth fruitful, and bring forth abundance of corn. Some of the Ancients have taught that there is a kind of natural marriage, between the earth and the clouds, or between the clouds and the corn, or any other fruits of the earth. Rain is the food of the earth, that is, of Fruits and Plants; to which the Prophet (*Hos. 2. 22.*) makes an elegant allusion. But I pass this.

The second interpretation I judge most congruous to the scope of the text, which saith clearly, *Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud.*

Whence note:

Those creatures which have greatest stores to give, may quickly have none left to give.

Here is a cloud and a thick cloud (*Elihu* doth not speak of an ordinary, but of a thick cloud) yet upon the Lords command to give showres the cloud is quite spent and wearied. Though men have the greatest affluence, the largest stores and stock, of wealth or riches, yea of gifts and graces, yet they may be wearied, and even drawn dry. The thickest clouds, that is, they who have the greatest treasures of strength, of wit, of learning and knowledge, are soon wearied, exhausted and emptied, unless they live in dependence

pendance upon God ; Only, *God himself can never be wearied by watering.* How much soever God giveth out to us, he is not at all emptied, but remains everlastingly equally full. And if God will speak to the meanest creature, even to that which seemeth most empty, it shall water others and not be wearied. The thick clouds, they who have much, may be spent, while he that hath but a little shall not be spent. The Prophet said to the poor woman (1 King. 17. 14.) *The oyl in the cruse, and the meal in the barrel shall not waste.* The woman might draw out of the oyl as long as she would, and still there would be a supply of oyl, nor would the barrel be weary in yeelding meal. The Lord can make the creature unwearied, and establish it to us for good. A full cloud will soon drop away, if the Lord forbear supplies; and a few drops shall be as an everlasting spring where the Lord gives out supplies. We may also allude to that (2 King. 4. 2.) There was a poor widow, and the creditors were ready to seize her two sons for bondmen, and, saith she, I have nothing but a little pot of oyl, and what will that do towards payment ? Well, saith the Prophet, *Go borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels, borrow not a few,* and thou shalt draw out of the pot, and the pot of oyl shall not be wearied by giving oyl into the vessels. God speaking to the pot of oyl it yeelded a continued supply ; the oyl never ceased till the woman had not a vessel to receive it. If God saith to the least pittance of temporals, which a man hath in this world, hold out, it shall not fail nor be weary ; 'tis so likewise in spiri- tuals, the Lord can make a little grace hold out, the thinnest cloud shall not be wearied by watering.

Again, *By watering he wearieth the thick cloud,* that is, God giveth out shewres to water the earth abundantly.

Hence note ;

God is very free and liberal;

He will empty the thick cloud upon the earth to make it fruitful ; He gives not only a few drops, but abundance; *and this is most true in spiri- tuals.* How doth the Lord *showre down and empty even who'e clouds of good things upon the soul !* as he hath promised, so he once did, and still doth sometimes (and will more in the last times) *poure out the Spirit,* which is an allusion to those showres of rain powred from the clouds : And as the Lord powres

powres out his Spirit, which can never be wearied or drawn dry; so the Lord makes use of many thick clouds (which hold much spiritual rain) even to weariness, for the refreshing of wearied souls; I mean such Ministers as he hath furnished with great gifts and graces, such as are not (as the Apostle *Jude* compareth some Teachers) *Clouds without water*, but (as true and faithful Teachers should be) full of water. The waterings of any *Apello* are at the Lords dispose: He saith, drop thy word here, drop thy word there, and thou shalt not drop thy word any more here or there. The Lord hath often been so bountiful to Nations and Churches, that he hath even wearied many thick clouds to water them with the rain of his word. That of the Psalmist (though it be true of the rain operly taken, falling upon the earth) is most true of spiritual rain falling upon the Churches (*Psal. 65. 10.*) *Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly, thou settest the furrows thereof.* And so is that also to be understood (*Psal. 68. 9.*) *Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain (or rain of liberalities) whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance when it was weary.* Thou didst even weary the thick cloud, to confirm, that is, to refresh thy weary people.

And seeing they who carry and dispence the Word are in Scripture emblematically expressed by Clouds (*Isa. 60. 8.* *Who are these that flee as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?* The Preachers of the Gospel come as so many clouds, and the Prophet tells us, the Word cometh down as rain and snow from heaven (*Isa. 55. 10.*) which supposeth a cloud from whence it cometh; for, saith the Lord, *So shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth, it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please;* Seeing, I say, the dispensers of the Word are compared to clouds) let them that sit under the droppings of these clouds take heed they be not unfruitful, or like that ground which drinketh in the rain, yet beareth nothing but briars and thorns, whose end is to be burned. God hath wearied and quire spent many of these thick clouds by continual dropping upon, and watering the souls of men, yet how barren, how fruitless are they! If but one of the clouds of heaven be wearied in watering the earth, we soon after discern the face of the earth refreshed and renewed by it: And shall God weary those heavenly clouds by watering men on earth, and men remain unrefreshed, unrenewed! Clouds of sorrow and
da. knes

darkneſs will at laſt weary all thoſe with their waterings and drop-
pings upon them, who, when God hath wearied his Clouds by wa-
tering them with the word of life from Heaven, yet remaine alto-
gether barren and unfruitfull. *By watering he wearieſh the thick
Cloud.*

He ſcattereth his bright Cloud.

The former part of the verſe ſpake of a *thick Cloud*, this latter
ſpake of a *bright Cloud*: The Hebrew is, *The Cloud of his light*; Nubes ex cujus
diffuſione lu-
cem reſtituit.
Hanc appellat
nubem lucis dei,
qua diſperſa lux
et ſerenitas in-
ducitur. Merc:
which I conceive is here added; Firſt, to ſhew that Clouds of all
ſorts ſerve the purpoſes of God; the thick Cloud, and the bright
Cloud, the dark Cloud, and the light Cloud, are made uſe of by
him. And as he doth weary the Cloud, that is full of water, ſo he
ſcattereth the Cloud that is full of light, or, *he ſcattereth his bright
Cloud.*

Yet ſome conſidering it is not ſaid in the letter of the Text, *Nubem lucis,*
A light Cloud, but *a Cloud of light*, underſtand by a *Cloud of light*, non dicit luci-
dam, ſed que
lucem abſcon-
dit. Coc:
ſuch a Cloud as hides and hinders the light, and which being ſcar-
tered, light and faire weather ſucceed. Yet rather as before.
But why is it here ſaid, that *he ſcattereth his bright Cloud*? poſſi-
bly, becauſe he hath no uſe of his bright Cloud, but of his thick
Cloud only, when he would water the earth. And indeed Clouds
which are only bright, or which have much light, but no water,
are of little uſe. Some have much light of knowledge, but no wa-
ter of inſtruction to drop upon others; ſuch Clouds God diſper-
ſeth and ſcatters. It is not an outward faire appearance, which
can bring us into acceptance with God, *The bright Cloud ſhall be
ſcattered*, if it have no rain in it, to water the earth.

Again, ſome tranſlate, *His light ſcattereth the Cloud*. So the
text may be read according to the letter of the Hebrew; as if the
meaning were this, God by the Sun-beams diſpels or diſperſeth
the Cloud; for Clouds are ſcattered ſometimes by the wind,
ſometimes by the Sun. That which gathered the Cloud, may alſo
ſcatter it. The Sun draweth up the vapours, of which Clouds are
formed or compacted, and ſoone after the Sun diſſolveth the
Clouds, which it had gathered. The ſame power makes and un-
makes the Cloud, gives it a body, and takes it away; *His light
ſcattereth the Cloud*. That's a truth alſo: For as brightneſs or light
is ſcattered among the Clouds, and makes the Clouds appeare
bright,

bright, so brightness or light scatters Clouds, or causeth them to disappear.

Elihu having thus discoursed of wind and cold, of freezing and thawing, of working some Clouds to weariness, and of scattering others, proceeds in the two following verses, to shew the special uses which the Lord makes of all those motions in the air, and impressions upon the Earth, with the Inhabitants of it, whether in a way of Judgment or of Mercy.

J O B, Chap. 37. Vers. 12, 13.

12. *And it is turned about by his counsel : that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth.*

13. *He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy.*

IN the former verse *Elihu* spake of the Clouds, of the thick Cloud wearied with watering, and of the bright Cloud, scattered by the Wind or Sun. In these two verses he further sets down two things more generally concerning the Clouds.

First, He shews whence the motion of the Cloud is, and by what or whom directed; *It is turned about by his counsel*, in the beginning of the 12th verse, and *he causeth it to come*, at the beginning of the 13th verse. There we have the Spring of the Clouds motion.

Secondly, *Elihu* shews the purpose, or the design of the Lord in turning about the Clouds by his counsel; which design is laid down two wayes.

First, In general, *That they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth*; that's the first purpose of God in moving the Clouds, they are to execute his Commands; and that's his general purpose.

Secondly, We have his special purposes or designs laid down in the close of the 13th verse, and they are three-fold. *He turneth about the Cloud, and causeth it to come,*

First,

First, For Correction.
Secondly, For his Land.
Thirdly, For Mercy.

He causeth it to come (saith Elihu) whether for Correction, for his Land, or for Mercy; all these purposes and designs God hath in moving and ordering these vast and mighty bodies of the Clouds, which hang like Mountains in the air. Thus you have the parts of these words, with their scope and tendency. More distinctly.

Vers. 12. *And it is turned about by his counsel.*

First, Vapours are raised and condensed into Clouds by the counsel of God, he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth, (Psal. 135. 7.) Which vapours (as was shewed before) are the material cause or matter of the Clouds.

Secondly, As by the counsel of God the vapours are raised, of which Clouds are made; so this Text tells us, that by his counsel the Clouds are moved, and order'd in their motion; which motion of the Clouds is very various; sometimes one way, sometimes another, sometimes forward, sometimes backward, or retrograde; sometimes their motion is circular, as the word here used by Elihu seemeth to imply, *It is turned or whirled about*; according to that of Solomon (Eccl. 1. 6.) *The wind goeth toward the South, and turneth about unto the North; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his Circuit.* We have here three words expressing the motion of the wind: First, it goeth; Secondly, whirleth about; Thirdly, returneth again; and all this according to its circuits. It is said of Samuel (1 Sam. 7. 16.) *He went from year to year in circuit, to Bethel and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all these places.* Thus the winds according to the Commission they receive from God, ride every year in circuit, now they are in one quarter, and anon in another, and wheresoever they come they may be said to do judgment in a way of favour to some, and in a way of displeasure unto others. The wind hath his Circuits, and as the Circuit of the wind is, such is the Circuit of the Clouds; the motion of the Clouds is from the wind, some say from the Starrs, but most generally, as to the natural cause, it is from the wind, which way the wind moves, that way the Clouds move. And though the motion of

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the Clouds and Winds seems exceeding unsteady and changeable, up and down, without any certain rule in Nature, yet they observe their Circuits, and run their compass as God appoynts them. Mr Broughton renders, *And for varieties, he turneth himself in his wise Counsels for their operation, for whatsoever he Commandeth them; It is turned about (say we)*

By his Counsel.

It should seem that God even calls a Council, which way the Clouds shall be directed, they go by his Council: The word in the Hebrew is a very significant one (that I mean) which we render his *Counsel*, others his *skill*, *his art or cunning*, and there are not a few who render it, they are turned about by *his Engines*, as if God did use (as it were) artificial Engines to turn about those mighty bodies of the Clouds; Properly the word signifieth *the Ropes and Tackling of a Ship*, in ordering which Ropes and Tackling the whole management of the Ship doth consist. The Mariner shews his skill and art in steering his Ship a right course, which he doth, not only by guiding the Rudder, but by ordering the Ropes and Tackling this way and that way, to compass or avoid the wind. And the Hebrew word (*Tachbuloth*) here used, hath a very great nearness in sound, to the Tackling of a Ship. This is a most elegant Metaphor, shewing how the Lord doth, as it were, steer the course of the Clouds, or guide the Clouds, as the Sea-man doth his Ship, his Counsels may be compared to the Tackling and the Ropes, or rather to the Helme, by which the Ship is guided; God is as the great Pilot sitting at the Steer, and he turns these Clouds as his Ship, he turns them about as a Ship tacks this way and that way, to reach her Port and there unlade. The Rain, Snow, & Hail, are the Lading which these swift Ships, the Clouds, carry from place to place, to serve the providences of God towards man. This divine conduct of the Clouds is very admirable! the Lord knowing what parts of the Earth need those Commodities, Rain, Snow, &c. which those aerial Vessels are laden with, for the enriching of the world. We render it *by his Counsel*, that is, by those means which he in his Wisdom and Counsel useth to turn the Clouds about, they are turned: we translate the word (*Pro. 1. 5.*) *Wise Counsels*, and (*Pro. 20. 18.*) *Good advice*, there Solomon saith, *With good advice make warre.*

And

תַּחְבּוּלוֹת
Proprie rei
nauticae; cri-
tia, quae in-
transandis fu-
nibus potissi-
mum consistit,
unde nominis
appellata.
Drus:
Convertuntur
artificiosissime.
Ier:
Ipsa quoque in-
circuibiles
non videntur ma-
chinis ejus.
Merc:
Vertitur soler-
tius ejus.
Drus:

And indeed good advice is the best tackling for Ships in a warre at Sea, and the best ammunition for a warre at Land : Councel is a noble, a notable Engine : The greatest things on Earth are turned about by it, and so are those great things in the air, the Clouds, *They are turned about by his Councel,*

That they may do whatsoever he Commandeth them.

Here's the general design and purpose of God, in turning about the Clouds whithersoever he please, it is that they may do whatsoever he Commandeth them ; where we have the Clouds set forth,

First, In their obedience, *They do the Commands of God.*

Secondly, In the universality of their obedience, *They do whatsoever he Commandeth.* *Elihu* compares the Clouds and Meteors to good servants, who are ready to do what God their Master requireth of them ; and not only so, but they do his Commands every where, or whithersoever he requires them, they do all his Commands, and that in all places, as the Text speaks in the next words,

Upon the face of the world in the Earth.

That is, whithersoever there is Earth, or a World, habitable or uninhabitable, hither, or so far doth God send the Clouds in his service, or for the executing of his will.

Further, when he saith, *Upon the face of the World*, his meaning is, upon the outside or uppermost part of the World ; and because the Heavens, even the uppermost Heavens are a part of the world, with which the Clouds have nothing to do, their business lying here below, therefore (I conceive) *Elihu* determines it expressly, *in the Earth.* The Clouds are not raised or made for the use and service of the world above, but of the world below. *They do whatsoever he Commandeth them upon the face of the World in the Earth.*

לְכָל אֶרֶץ
pars terra ha-
bitabilis, Grae-
ce δὲ οὐρανὸν.

Hence observe, First ;

The motion of the Clouds is not of themselves, nor meerly from any natural cause or power, but of God ;

He as it were by certain Engines and weights, turnes them about ; they move not unawares, nor by the uncertain changes of

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the Air, but according to his direction and unchangeable purpose; *It is turned about by his Counsel.* The creatures do not govern themselves, nor are they Masters of their own motions; *The way of man is not in himself,* surely then the way of the Cloud is not in it self. Clouds take their course according to the order and command which they receive from God.

Again, *The Clouds are thus turned about by the Counsel of God, that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them.*

Hence note;

Clouds are sent about work; there's somewhat to be done by every Cloud.

God will not have a Vapour arise, nor a Cloud stir for nothing, he commands them to be doing. And if God send Clouds abroad to work, much more doth he send man forth into the world to do work, & appoints him what work to do. The first Man was no sooner made, and set up in a state of created perfection, but he was presently set to work, he must be doing (*Gen. 2. 15.*) *And the Lord God took the man (or Adam) and put him into the Garden of Eden, to dress and to till it.* From the Angels in Heaven to the worms that creep upon the earth, there's no creature but hath somewhat to do; yea, not only the living and rational creatures, but (as here in the Text) the very inanimate creatures, the senseless creatures, the Clouds, have somewhat to do, God sends them forth upon his business. Every creature hath a service, hath somewhat to do: And therefore, *it will be ill with those whom God finds idle, or doing nothing, or nothing to any good purpose.* That servant had been doing, to whom Christ in the Parable is represented thus speaking at the last day, *Well done good and faithful Servant.*

Thirdly observe;

The Clouds are faithful and ready Servants, they do whatsoever the Lord commands them.

They are Gods Messengers, and they will do any or every Errand, which he sends them about, and trusts them with. 'Tis the duty and commendation of a Servant, to do whatsoever he is commanded. A mans servant must do all his Masters just and lawful commands; he must not take up this or that command to do it, and

and pass by the rest. The Rule is plain (*Col. 3. 23.*) *Servants obey your Masters in all things*: Much more must a Servant of God obey him in all things. (*Acts 13. 22.*) *I have found David a man after mine own heart; he shall fulfill all my will.* *David was a trusty servant; he was not like Saul, who did the Lords work to halves.* The Clouds are trusty Servants, they do whatsoever God commands them; and we may distribute the commands which God gives the Clouds, into two Ranks.

First, The command of God to the Clouds is sometimes for the hurt or punishment of man. God threatens and he executes vengeance by the Clouds (*Ezek. 13. 13.*) Winds convey the Clouds, and the Clouds pour down overflowing showers in the anger of God, and great hail-stones in his fury, to consume and ruine all before them.

Secondly, Clouds execute the command of God in a way of favour; as they execute his threatnings, so they fulfil his promises (*Hos. 2. 21, 22.*) Both these commands to the Clouds are expressly mentioned in the next verse, I only touch them here.

Now forasmuch as the Clouds are here described under the notion of the prest and faithful Servants of God, doing whatsoever he commands, take these Inferences from it.

First, If Clouds do whatsoever God commands them, then surely Christians ought to do whatsoever Christ commands them: Shall the Clouds of God out-do the children of God in obedience? We find that admonition often urged in the Scripture of the New Testament, especially in the 13th of *Matthew*, and in the 1st 2d and 3d Chapters of the *Revelation*, *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.* But behold a wonder, they that have no ears hear! The Clouds have no ears, and yet they hear, and more than hear, they do the commands of God. *What shall we say, when Clouds hear and obey, and men do neither? Let us learn Duty from the Clouds.* We are sent to the School of Nature in holy Scripture, almost throughout. *Elihu* seems to say, *Go to the Clouds, O ye that are either slothful or disobedient, consider their work and be wise; they are continually doing whatsoever the Lord commands them.*

Secondly, If the Clouds do whatsoever God commands them, then here's matter of comfort to all who do what God commands them; surely God will not command the Clouds to do them any hurt.

hurt who are doing his commands. If you can say that you do the commands of God, you may rest assured God will never give the Clouds a command to do you hurt. I do not say but an affliction may drop out of the Clouds upon a man that is doing the commands of God; or, the Clouds may have a command to drop affliction upon him that is doing the commands of God: but the Clouds drop no hurt upon any that do the commands of God. And therefore seeing the Clouds, even those Clouds that carry Storms and Tempests, Thunder and Lightning, Snow, Hail, and Rain, the great Rain of his strength, seeing I say, these Clouds, that are the Treasuries and Magazines of such terrible things, are at the command of God, let not his faithful people fear; for when the Winds are Stormy, when the Clouds are black, and carry, as we think, nothing but wrath and death in them, God will take care of them, and charge his Clouds to do them no harm. Clouds, whatsoever they are doing, are doing Gods commands, and doubtless he will not give them any commands for their hurt who keep and do his commands.

And as 'tis matter of comfort to the faithful Servants of God, that he commandeth the Clouds in the Air, so that he also commands those Clouds which are raised in the hearts of men, or that sit and appear in their faces and foreheads. We often see Clouds gather in the Brows of displeased mortals. As some are clouded with sorrow, so others are clouded with anger and wrath. Those black Clouds in the faces of men are as dreadful as the blackest Clouds in the Air; yet the Lord who commands the Clouds in the Air, commands the Clouds of anger and choler, of wrath and indignation, rising out of the hearts, and appearing in the faces of men, and can blow them over, or blot them out, whensoever he pleaseth.

Thirdly, If the Lord by his commands orders the Clouds, and the Clouds are ready to execute his commands, then let us have high thoughts of the power of God, and of his commands. If men refuse the commands of God, if the stout and hard hearts of men will not stoop to them, the Clouds of Heaven, yea, the clods of the earth will. Whatsoever God commands, he will have it done; not one tittle, not one *Iota* (as Christ spake of the Law) shall fall short, or fail, or be unfulfilled. If such and such will not, others shall; if *Jews* will not, *Gentiles* shall; if the *Jews* will

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not carry it like the children of *Abraham*, God can and will raise up children unto *Abraham* of the Stones of the Street ; he will not want instruments to answer his Counsels, nor to execute his commands. God will shake Heaven and Earth, but he will have his Will done, and his decrees perfected, yea, he will dissolve and ruine them rather than not have his Word fulfilled. That of *David* (*Psal. 136. 2.*) *Thou hast magnified thy Word above all thy Name,* is true of the word of command, as well as of the word of promise. God will magnifie the word of his promise above all his Name, and he will also magnifie the word of his command above all his Name ; that is, his Word is as a glass, wherein *his Name*, that is, his Holiness, his Power, his Goodness, his Faithfulness, his Mercy, his Justice, and his Wrath, are to be seen, and shall be seen in the accomplishments of it towards the children of men. Therefore fear and admire this mighty God, who will find means for the executing of his Word, for the doing of all that he hath spoken ; *The Clouds shall do whatsoever he commandeth them, upon the face of the world in the earth.*

Fourthly, If the Clouds are turned about by his Counsel, if he doth, as it were, hale the Ropes to turn the Clouds which way soever he pleaseth, then, *Whensoever you see the Clouds gathered by the wind, remember God hath somewhat to do,* there's somewhat to be done ; these Clouds are the Servants of God, there's some command or word of God or other to be fulfilled. We do not, as we ought, consider the Counsel of God in the motion of the Clouds ; yea, some when the Clouds gather, and the storms of Wind or Rain, of Thunder and Lightning, break forth, are more ready to think of the Counsel of the Devil, than of God, they are apt to say, surely, *There's Conjuring abroad* : What's that, but the executing of the Devils Counsel ? whereas we should say, God doth it by his Counsel. Take heed of neglecting God when you see the Clouds ; do not attribute their motion, or the most dreadful Storms that proceed from them, to any thing beside the Counsel of God ; for there is not the least vapour can rise out of the earth, for the making of a Cloud, but he causeth it to ascend ; there are not any materials gathered toward the constituting of a Cloud, but they are under Gods hand, he causeth the vapours to ascend : and there is not the least breath of wind can stir to move the Clouds (Clouds are moved with the wind) but as God hath appointed ;

appointed; neither bad Angel, nor good, can stir a Cloud, but as God willeth. And therefore look to the hand and counsel of God in all these things, take heed of staying in any work of Nature, do not ascribe these impressions and perturbations in the Air to the power of the Devil and wicked Arts; all is of the Lord, whatsoever is done. One of the Ancients said concerning the Devils, when they desired leave to enter the Swine, *Why should any of the sheep of God be afraid of the Devil, when the Devils cannot have power over the Swine without leave from God?* The Devil cannot move a breath of wind, but according to the will of God; though he be the Prince of the Air, yet there is a Prince above him, to whose commands all are subject, both in Heaven and in Earth.

Fifthly, If it be so, that God commands the Clouds whensoever they come with their storms or shows, then ascribe the praise of all the good you receive from the clouds to God, and be humbled under the hand of God, whensoever you receive outward damage from the clouds, do not say it is a chance.

Sixthly, Learn hence the greatness and the sovereignty of God, say as they did admiringly (*Math. 8. 27.*) *Who is this, that both the Winds, and Seas, and Clouds obey him!* None of the words of the Lord shall fall to the ground, as an Arrow or Dart that misseth the Mark, or as water spilt, that cannot be gathered up again; which latter allusion is specially intimated (*1 Sam. 3. 12, 19.*) Here in the Text *Elihu* sets forth the Power and Sovereignty of God, having all creatures at his beck and command, as hath been shewed already from other passages in this Book, and more will occur hereafter. The Sovereignty of God over men can never be duly acknowledged, till we acknowledge his Sovereignty over Winds and Rain, Hail and Snow, which lye in the Bowels and bowels of the clouds, and from thence are dispensed to the earth, at the will of God.

Seventhly and lastly, If the clouds do whatsoever God commands them, if they be such faithful servants to God, then surely the clouds will one day rise up, or come forth as witnesses against all that resist the commands of God: Not to obey them is bad enough, but to resist them is far worse. Christ would awaken the Scribes and Pharisees, by telling them (*Mark 12. 41.*) *The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the Judgment against this Generation, and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching*

ing of *Tonah*; as also the *Queen of the South*, because she came from far to hear the wisdom of *Solomon*. If *Jesus Christ* urged those instances of the men of *Niniveh*, and of the *Queen of the South*, to terrifie that Generation for not obeying his commands, or for not receiving the Promises of the Gospel; doubtless then in the great Day, the very clouds and winds shall come in as witnesses against all those that have resisted the will of God in any of his commands. Have the Clouds (will he say) done whatsoever I commanded them? and have you resisted? have you cast my words behind your back, when the very Clouds have taken up, embrac'd, and fulfilled them? The Clouds will be a swift witness against all those that rebel against the commands of God: The Snow and Rain, the Winds and Storms fulfilling his word; will bring in a casting Evidence against all those who have cast his word behind their backs. All this we may read and see in the commanding power of God over the Clouds, and in their readiness to obey.

Elihu proceeds.

Vers. 13. *He causeth it to come, whether for Correction, or for his Land, or for Mercy.*

He, that is, *God* causeth, *It*, that is, the Cloud; *He causeth the Cloud to find* (so the Hebrew) to find every place and every person, concerning whom it hath received command and commission from God. Thus the word is used by *Moses* (*Numb. 32. 23.*) *If ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out*; that is, the punishment of your sin, and that Judgment which God will pour out upon you for your sin, will find you out wheresoever ye are. In this sence the Cloud will find us out; we render well, *He causeth it to come*, that is, to come to that place or person, to that Nation or People, to which himself hath appointed it: *He causeth it to come*,

Whether for Correction, or for his Land, or for Mercy.

Here are three ends or purposes of God, in communicating and commanding forth the Clouds, and we may take those three ends two wayes.

The first of these and the last concern Man more specially; the second concerns all other creatures, both Plants and Beasts of the earth; it concerns all, from the Cedar in *Lebanon* to the Hy-

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top on the wall, among the Plants, and from the Lion to the Mouse, or to the least of living or sensible creatures among the Beasts; all which God, according to his Sovereign Power, and Justice, doth either comfort or afflict as he pleaseth.

Again, The ends which God aimeth at respecting Man, are either for Correction or for Mercy.

עֲלֵה לְשׁוֹבַע
Sive ad vir-
gam, עֲלֵה לְשׁוֹבַע
Sive in disci-
plinam.

First, *He causeth* the Cloud, with whatsoever is its burden, Hail, or Rain, or Snow, to unlade and disburden it self, *for correction*, The Hebrew is, *for a Rod*, so we put in the Margin. A Rod is for correction; therefore we translate *for correction*, *for discipline*. God sends the Clouds to whip or discipline a people. Further, the word signifies a Rod under a twofold Notion.

First, A Rod or a Staff to smite or strike with, in which sense it is called (*Prov. 22. 15.*) *The Rod of correction*; and at the 8th verse of the same Chapter, *The Rod of anger*; as also (*Isa. 10. 5.*) *O Assyrian, the Rod of mine anger* (saith God) Here's a Rod to smite with.

Secondly, It signifies a Rod to govern with, or to rule with; and hence this word denotes the Scepter of a Prince. The two great Emblems of Magistracy are a Sword and a Scepter. The Scepter is in the fashion of a Rod or Wand, which imports chastening and correction; and from hence it was that the chief of the Tribes of the Children of Israel (*Numb. 17. 2.*) were commanded to take every one of them a Rod, according to the house of their Fathers, twelve Rods, and to write every mans Name upon his Rod, and lay them up in the Tabernacle of the Congregation, &c. Now those Rods given in by the Princes of the Tribes, were as so many Emblems of their Power and Authority, because to the chief Magistrate the punishment of the faults and miscarriages of all under his government did belong. And hence the same word signifies a Magistratical Rod or Scepter of Government, and a Tribe or whole Family under the Rod or Scepter of a Governour, because as Rods or Branches grow from one Root, so many Tribes or Families from one Father; thus the Twelve Tribes of Israel sprung from Jacob. And that's the Reason why the Latine Translator renders this place, not as we, (*whether for correction*) but, *Whether for a Tribe*; the meaning of which reading, *Whether for a Tribe, or for his Land*, is thus given, Whether it be for one particular place, or for the whole Country or earth in general, as will

will further appear in opening those words, *For his Land.* This Translation of the Vulgar Latine, and the Interpretation given upon it, futes well with that of the Prophet (*Amos 4. 7*) where the Lord saith, *I caused it to Rain upon one City, and not upon another:* Here was Rain for a Tribe, and not for his Land, not an universal Rain all the Land over; he causeth it to rain upon one City, not upon another, upon one Tribe, not upon another; that's a good sense, and the word will bear it.

Yet I rather take it here for a *Rod*, which imports chastening or correcting, as we translate, *Whether it be for Correction.* They that carried the Rod or the Scepter, had also the power of correction in their hand, as was toucht before; and that may be one Reason why when God sent *Moses* to *Pharaoh* (*Exod. 4. 17.*) upon that great Message, the deliverance of the children of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, he commanded him to take his *Rod* in his hand; which *Rod* held out these two things. First, that *Moses* came not as a private man to him, but like a Prince, like an Ambassador from the great King, or like one whom he had appointed to take upon him the government of that people, with a Scepter in his hand. Secondly, to let *Pharaoh* know, that as God sent him with a power, or clothed him with a Commission to treat with him, so with a power to scourge or plague him, even with ten Plagues. As if the Lord had said, *O Pharaoh*, Seest thou this *Rod* in the hand of my servant *Moses*; assure thy self, thou shalt have stroke upon stroke, plague upon plague, if thou wilt not let my people go. But of that by the way. *He causeth it to come for correction, or for a Rod.*

Hence note;

God can correct us by any of his Creatures.

He can make any thing a *Rod*; he can make nearest Relations a *Rod*. A Son is sometimes a *Rod* to his Father; how often have miscarryng and undutiful children been made a *Rod* of correction to their Parents? and they are usually so, when Parents have not duly corrected their children for their undutifulness and miscarrynges. What are cruel men but *Rods* to other men? Some men have been the scourges of Mankind. *Attila*, once a great Commander in War, and King of the *Hunnes*, was called *The Rod or the Scourge of God*. And so God himself called the *Assyrians* the *Flagellum Dei*.

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Rod

Rod of his anger (*Isa. 10. 5.*) *David* called all wicked men in general the Sword of God, in his prayer for deliverance from them (*Psal. 17. 13, 14.*) *Deliver my soul from the wicked, thy sword, from men which are thy hand, O Lord (thy correcting hand, men ordain'd for Judgment, and establisht for Correction, as the Prophet spake of the Chaldeans Hab. 1. 12.) who have their portion in this life.* And as the Lord makes men, so the Beasts of the earth, a Rod for the correction of Man. Thus the Lord threatened by his Prophet, *I will send among them, Sword, and Pestilence, and noysome Beasts.*

Here in the Text we have a Rod made of a Cloud, a strange kind of Rod; I'll send it for a Rod, it shall come for correction. Parents correct their children with Rods, God corrects the world with Floods; first, with unseasonable, secondly, with superfluous Rains. O what severe corrections hath God laid upon the world by the Clouds! The Clouds have been terrifying, destroying Rods (*Exod. 9. 18, 23.*) Clouds have destroyed the Fruits of the earth for the sin of Man, and taken away the hopes of the Harvest. Rain from the Clouds hath ruined the dwellings of men, and spoyled both Corn and Cattel; Rain from the Clouds was that overflowing scourge, which destroyed the whole earth in the dayes of *Noah*; then God caused the Cloud to come, I cannot say for correction, but for ruine, for an universal ruine and devastation. And as God then made the Clouds a ruine to the world, so he often makes them a correction (*1 Sam. 12. 18, 19. Ezra 10. 9.*) we have had many examples, both of sweeping Rains, and dreadful Thunders, Lightning and Tempest, coming forth from the Clouds.

The Apostle saith (*Rom. 1. 18.*) *The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness, &c.* God hath revealed his wrath from Heaven chiefly in and by the Ministry of his Word; he may be said also to reveal his wrath from Heaven against sinful man in and by the Ministry of the Clouds; they have often lifted up their Voyce like a loud Trumpet, and louder than a Trumpet, to tell the sons of men of their transgression, and to reprove them for their sin. And therefore when we see extraordinary gatherings of the Clouds, we should take instruction, lest we provoke the Lord to send, or cause them to come for correction. The Clouds drop down many good Lessons and admonitions, and if they are not attended

attended to, the next thing they drop is a Rod or Correction;
He causeth it to come, whether for correction,

Or for his Land.

For whose Land? Some refer it to the Cloud, that is, for the Land out of which the Cloud was made; for the Vapours which arise out of the Land by the attractive power of the Heavens make Clouds. As if the meaning were, he causeth the Cloud to fall down upon that Land out of which it was raised: whereas oftentimes a Cloud is made of Vapours raised from one Land or Country, and by the command of God is carried to another Land or Country very far off.

*Pronomen (sua)
 alii ad nubem
 referunt, ut di-
 cat, pro terra
 in qua genita
 fuit. Druf.*

But I rather take the Antecedent to *his* to be God himself; *His Land*, that is, *Gods Land*, or the Land of God. But then the Question is, what are we to understand by *his Land*? hath God a Land distinct from others, as the Princes of the World have? are not all Lands his? I answer,

First, The truth is, all the World is Gods Land; so that where-soever the Clouds fall they fall upon his Land (*Psal. 50. 12.*) *The World is mine, and the fulness of it*, saith the Lord. God is the great Land-lord of all the World.

Secondly, Sometimes in special the habitable part of the World is called the Land of God (*Psal. 24. 1.*) there being a part of the World supposed uninhabitable, or wherein no man dwels.

Thirdly, *His Land*, that is, the Land which God doth peculiarly own (*Exod. 19. 5.*) *You are a peculiar Treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine.* As the Israelites were the Lords peculiar people, so some Lands are his peculiar's, he specially calls them his Land, and entitles himself to them beyond all other Lands. The Land of *Canaan* was called *The Lords Land*, because he was known and worshipped there (*Hos. 9. 3.*) We may say in general, Look in whatsoever Country or place God is truly known, honour'd, and worshipped, that is his Land, and that's the Land here chiefly intended (say some) by *his Land*. *He causeth it to come, whether for correction,*

*Peculiariter
 terra Dei vo-
 catur terra
 sancta in qua
 Dei cultus ex-
 ercetur.
 Sic nominat
 unamquamque
 gentem cui
 bene vult.*

Or for his Land.

That is, for the good and benefit of that Land wherein his Name is professed, and himself truly worshipped. That's a good
 sence;

sence; For doubtless the Lord takes more care of such a Land, than of any other Land. The eyes of the Lord were upon the Land of *Canaan*, he took care of it from the beginning of the Year to the end thereof, even to water it with the Rain of Heaven (*Deut. 11. 12.*) Thus 'tis said (*Psal. 68. 9, 10.*) *Thou O God didst send (or shake out) a plentiful Rain (a Rain of munificences or liberalities) whereby thou didst confirm thine Inheritance when it was weary: Thy Congregation hath dwelt therein.* Every Land to which God bears special respect and good-will (which whensoever he doth, he doth it with respect to the people inhabiting there) may be emphatically called *His Land*. Yet,

Fourthly, Forasmuch as the latter word *for mercy*, seems to imply that special favour which God bestowes upon his own people, in sending forth the Clouds with Rain; therefore by *His land* I rather conceive the earth in general is meant; or yet, to take it more particularly, that part of the earth which no man claims, which is scarce habitable by man, that which is a vast Wilderness or Desert for wild beasts, that Land which is overgrown with Trees and Bushes, a Land which no man dresseth or bestoweth any culture or husbandry upon, even for that Land doth God take care, as his Land, thither he sends Rain, that the Beasts may have Pasture, and Plants moisture, that it may be watered and provided for, as well as those Lands that men by their care and industry manure as their own peculiars. 'Tis said (*Chap. 38. 26.*) *He (that is, God) causeth it to rain on the earth, where no man is, on the Wilderness, wherein there is no man.* Thus in the Text, *He causeth it to come for his land*, a Land which hath no owner but himself.

Hence Observe;

God hath an universal respect to, and care over all his Creatures.

Wheresoever God hath a foot of Land in the World (though no foot of man comes there) he sends the Clouds to do it service, for the sake only of wild Beasts living there, and of Trees and Plants growing there. (*Psal. 36. 6.*) *Lord, thou preservest Man and Beast:* Not only doth God preserve men, but beasts; and where no men are God provides for beasts, that they may have food and live. We may hence argue as the Apostle did in another case,

case, (1 Cor. 9. 9.) *Doth God take care for Oxen ? Hath he respect to the wast Lands, to the wild Beasts of the Wilderness ? surely then he will take care of inhabited Lands, he will cause the Cloud to come and water the Land where men dwell, especially where good men dwell ; to them he causeth it to come (as it followeth in the Text)*

For Mercy.

The third Message about which the Clouds are sent or caused to come, is for favour. God dispenceth mercy by the Cloud, *he causeth it to come for mercy.* The Original word rendred *mercy* ^{מֶרֶץ} hath a great significancy in it, this especially, a bountiful good-will towards others, without respect to merit, or any antecedent obligation. When here 'tis said *He causeth it to come for Mercy,* ^{Dei propensam omnibus beneficiendi voluntatem denotat.} we are to understand much more than was meant before, when 'tis said, *He causeth it to come for his land,* to feed the beasts, and nourish the Plants ; and I conceive we may give a twofold interpretation of it.

First, *For Mercy,* that is, for some eminent uses, besides those that are for meer necessity, to water the earth. Rain is sent,

First, To purge ; Secondly, to cool the air ; Thirdly, to cherish and comfort the fruits of the Earth. But besides these common and ordinary ends of sending rain, somewhat extraordinary seems to be intended, when the Text saith, *He causeth it to come for mercy, or favour.* What's the favour or special mercy that comes by rain ? Surely it is the sending of such a rain and such a blessing with it, as causeth the earth to bring forth abundantly. The Lord can more than supply wants, he can give plenty, he can give as much in one year as may serve for two or three. Thus he promised (*Levit. 25. 21.*) *Then I will Command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years ; the sixth year was the year before the Sabbath-year, for then they were not to till the ground ; Now if you carefully observe my Sabbath-year (saith God) you shall have no want, though you do not sow.* This is a mercy, when God sends in a double or treble Crop, when he not only sends enough to serve the turn or to keep us alive, but abundance and plenty, so that *the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oyle,* as the promise is expressed, *Joel 2. 24.* ^{Sive ad Benignitatem, sc. ut benigne fiat terra circa necessitatem, ut cum pluvia descendit sicut non est ad aerem refrigerandum. Drus.}

Hence

Hence note;

God is not only a just, but a bountifull Master;

He doth not only give us enough for necessity, but for delight and contentment; if we use his bounty well, and can not his blessings to his dishonour, plenty will be our mercy. The Clouds come sometimes for Correction, God sweepes away even our necessities, by raines, which are therefore in Scripture called *sweeping raines*; at other times the Clouds come for mercy, and empty themselves to fill us with the blessings of the earth; but, we both by corrections and favours may be led to repentance, and receive further mercy, not only mercy from the Clouds, but mercy above the Clouds. Thus the words stand in a fair opposition, and one part of the verse illustrates the other.

Yet I conceive there is somewhat further in these words, *for mercy*, or *in mercy and free benignity*; which may intimate thus much to us,

That even the Rain from the Clouds, and fruits of the earth, are not given us of desert, but of free favour and mercy.

They come for mercy, or as a mercy. God doth not feed the World because he owes them any thing, but because he is mercifull; we do not oblige him to give us a drop of rain, or a morsell of bread; sweet showres from Heaven, and plentiful harvests on Earth, are acts of grace, mercy, favour, and good-will unto man. God payeth men wages in nothing but in punishment, when God punisheth, he payes wages, that which is deserv'd; if God send the Clouds for Correction, we have what our sins have procured and brought up on us; but if he send plenty, we have mercy, a gracious bounty or largesse from the hand of God; our daily bread is not pay nor wages, but reward and mercy, much lesse is that which is more or beyond our daily bread. We by sin deserve that the Heavens should be (as the Lord threaten'd his ancient people in case of disobedience) as brass, and the Earth as iron; but we have not deserv'd that the Heavens should drop fatness, and the Earth yeild her increase; this is mercy. Not only are we to look upon the Pardon of sin as a mercy, and Redemption by the blood of Christ as a mercy, and Justification through his Righteousness as mercy, and eternall life as a mercy, or coming from mercy,

mercy and free grace ; but we are to receive every bit of bread as coming to us through mercy, freely, and not upon any account of our own workings or deservings. And if we cannot deserve a ſhowre, no nor a drop of rain from the Clouds, if we cannot deserve a Crop of Corn from the Earth, then ſurely we cannot deserve grace or peace from God, or eternal life and happineſs with God.

Therefore how ſhould we magnifie and admire the mercy and free grace of God for ſpiritual things, when we ſee ſuch cauſe of magnifying him, even for temporal good things ! if the Clouds are favourable to us, it is of mercy.

Further, That notion may be well improv'd, which ſome give of this word, reading the Abſtraſt by the Concrete ; we ſay, *For mercy*, they ſay for the *mercifull*, that is, for the *liberall, benigne, and mercifull man*, the *man of a large heart to do good* : God cauſeth the Cloud to come ſometimes for *Correction*, uſually for *his land*, to conveigh common comforts, and he hath his times wherein he cauſeth it to come for *the merciful*, that is, in ſpecial favour to thoſe that are mercifull, and good, and gracious, both as they have received grace from God, and as they have done good things for and among men : He that *watereth, ſhall be watered alſo himſelf*, (Pro. 11. 24.) Thus you ſee the three-fold Meſſage that God ſends the Clouds upon, either to *Correct* men for their ſin, or for *his Land*, that the Creature in general may have ſubſiſtence, or for *ſpecial favour and mercy* to his peculiar people, and for thoſe above the reſt, of good men, who are mercifull and ready to do good.

J O B, Chap. 37. Vers. 14, 15, 16.

14. *Hearken unto this, O Job, stand still and consider the wondrous works of God.*

15. *Dost thou know when God disposed them and caused the light of his cloud to shine?*

16. *Dost thou know the ballancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?*

THis context begins the second part of the Chapter, wherein *Elihu*

First, exciteth *Job* to a serious contemplation of the wonderful works of God; this is expressed in the 14th verse.

Secondly, He urgeth the weakness and inability of *Job*, and indeed of any man, to understand the full compass of those works: And this he doth

First, In general, as to them all, in the beginning of the 15th verse, *Dost thou know when God disposed them?*

Secondly, he sheweth his inability as to particulars, or the several kinds of the works of God:

First, As to his *causing of the Light to shine*, in the close of the 15th verse.

Secondly, As to his *weighing or ballancing of the Clouds*, verse 16th.

The summe of these three verses, together with the two next which follow, make up an earnest exhortation, that *Job* considering, and comparing that great power and wisdom of God, which appear & shine in those forementioned works, with his own weakness and insufficiency, would therefore humble himself, and not venture any further to contest or plead with God.

And because many of the Lords providential works are unsearchable, as well as these which are natural, therefore *Elihu* would not have *Job* busie himself in any curious prying into those which concerned his present condition. For, if there be infinite and unerring wisdom tempered with mercy, and justice with goodness, in all the outward dispensations of God, ordering the motions and

Mete-

Meteors of the Heavens, the Clouds, the Rain, the Snow and Hail, the Lightning and the Thunder; then surely Job ought to sit down convinced, that there is a like temperament of equity with severity, and of goodness with sharpness in all his dealings with men, and was with him in particular. That's the scope and purpose of *Elihu* all along, in reading *Job* this Philosophical Lecture, or in putting Questions to him about the things of Nature, and the regiment of God in these inferiour heavens, the Air, where all things seem to move without rule, or by no rule other than what Nature alone imposeth.

Vers. 14. *Hearken unto this, O Job.*

We have more than once met with this awakening exhortation, which calleth for such an harkening, as if a man were to be all ear in attending what is spoken. We may well render it, *Ear this, O Job*, take it, drink it in at thine ear; *Hearken*

Unto this;

Elihu doth not exhort him to attention in general, but draws it down to some special matter, *Hearken unto this, O Job.* Which words may have a double reference, either

First, to what he had said before (vers. 13th) telling him how God sends the Rain and causeth the Cloud to come, *either for correction, or for his land, or for mercy; Hearken unto this, O Job*, here's a lesson for thee, remember it well, God sends forth these servants of his, the Clouds to do his work, either for correction or for mercy, either in favour or in judgment; *Hearken unto this, O Job*: Or,

Secondly, The words may refer to that which followeth, and so, as one calls them, they are an *Exordium*, a brief *Exordium*, or short preface to what *Elihu* had further to say; as if he would a little relieve the spirits and quicken the attention of *Job*, by acquainting him, that he had some new matter to lay before him. As if he had said, I have not yet uttered all my mind, I have somewhat more upon my heart, which I cannot hold in, both for thy conviction and instruction; *Hearken unto this, O Job.*

Yet it may be questioned, why *Elihu* should thus stir up his attention, either to consider what he had spoken, or what he was now about to speak? Was *Job* a heedless, an un-attentive hear-

er? We may conceive he was occasioned to give him this spur, or excitation, for these three reasons, or at least some of them.

First, We may suppose, that *Job* having been entertained with a long discourse, began to grow weary and slacken his attention, and therefore, as when we see one in a congregation remiss in hearing, or sleeping out a weighty point, we jog him, or say, *Hearken to this*; so *Elihu* here.

Hence note, First;

A good hearer of the Word, may sometimes want an awakening word.

He that is not (as *Job* was not) a *first*, nor *second*, nor *third-ground-hearer*, but (as *Job* was) a *fourth-ground-hearer*, one that heareth with a good and honest heart, yet, even he may a little let down his watch, and give just occasion to the speaker for such a short diversion as *Elihu* here used, *Hearken (I pray) to this*. There is a willingness of spirit in all *fourth-ground*, or *right-hearted hearers*, yet, there is also, even in them, a weakness of the flesh; corruption may be stirring, temptation may be working, therefore 'tis no unnecessary jealousy in the Ministers of the Gospel, sometimes to mingle or interweave such passages as these, in speaking to them, pray hearken, stir up and awaken your selves: There may be need of this (I say) where there is a general good bent of heart. Some pretending hearers are like the Idols of the heathen, *who have eyes and see not, ears and hear not*; who, when they are hearing, set themselves, at least give way, to sleep, and willingly yeeld to the drowsiness of their spirits; this sheweth an evil heart: but a good man may be overtaken with drowsiness, and find much indisposition to duty, while he is in duty, and then he will count it a favour, to hear such a word as this cast in, *Pray hearken*.

Secondly, *Elihu* might afresh provoke him to more serious attention, because the matter he had to deliver, was of more importance, or did more nearly concern him, than what he had said before.

Hence note;

Though the whole truth of God is to be attended to, yet there are some truths that call for special attention.

Here

Here is an accent put upon the point in hand, *Hearken to this.* We should not let any truth fall to the ground, truth is precious quite through, and we may say of truth as of gold, the very filings of it are precious. We save the least dust of Gold, every grain of it is of worth, and so is every grain, or the least dust of divine truth. *One jot, one tittle of the Law* (saith Christ, *Mat. 5. 18.*) *shall in no wise passe till all be fulfilled*; Surely then, no jot, no tittle of it should be lightly passed by, by us. Yet there are some divine truth like studs of massie gold, or as jewels, which ought to be more carefully attended to, and laid up in the cabinet of the heart; Some truths have an emphasis, a *Selah* set upon them, *O hearken to these.* Christ saith in the Gospel, about the tything of mint, anise and cummin, *These things ye ought to do,* but be sure ye do not leave the weightier matters of the Law, *Judgment, Mercy and Faith undone* (*Matth. 23. 23.*) so say I, attend to the least truths, but be sure ye attend to fundamental truths, to those truths upon which the whole weight of the soul stands; Such is, *The great Mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the flesh*; and the great Grace of Faith in that Mytery: These, with several others, are the fundamentals, the very vitalls of Religion; all falls and dies, unlesse ye stand fast and live in these: *O hearken unto them.*

Thirdly, *Elihu* may be conceived to speak thus to *Job*, because he saw him about to interrupt him; possibly he might perceive a little passion stirring in him, therefore, not only to keep up his attention, or to wind up his watch, but to repress and keep down some stormy troubled motions rising in his spirit, *Elihu* made this short interlocution or digression, *Hearken to this, O Job, suffer me to speak out, do not take me off, I have not yet done.*

Hence note;

Patience is necessary in a good hearer;

And that not only for the doing what is heard, but for the hearing of it. As we can never bring forth the fruit of that which we hear without patience, so neither can we without patience hear that which should make us fruitful. The great grace to be exercised in hearing the Word, is Faith; yet we have need of Patience in hearing the Word, and that in a double respect.

First, *We have need of Patience,* as to continuance in hearing.

Some

some would fain have done presently, they cannot sit it out, an hour is an year to them, the word is a weariness to them, they soon think they have enough.

Secondly, There is need of patience for submission to what is heard. How short soever the Sermon is, yet when it pincheth the conscience and pricketh the heart, it is not easily born. They who hear quietly some words of truth, will not endure some other; we hardly continue hearing with any patience, when to us, the word heard, is a hard saying, and bares hard upon either, our consciences or our practices; when the finger is, as it were, laid upon, and presseth the sore, few can endure it. 'Tis ealie to hear pleasing things, but that which croileth our spirits or our wayes calls for patience. When Stephen, the Proto-martyr, preached to the Jews, and brought the word home to their consciences, by that close application (*Acts 7. 51.*) *Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ear, ye do alwayes resist the Holy Ghost; as your Fathers did, so do ye. At this word, or, when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart (saith the text) and they gnashed on them with their teeth;* their patience was quite spent, they could hear no longer. And when St. Paul spake to that great Assembly (*Acts 22. 1, — 22, 23.*) *They gave him audience unto this word (I will send thee to the Gentiles) and then lift up their voices and said, away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live: Then they cryed out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust in the air.* Thus they raved and were enraged, like angry, yea like mad dogs, when once their title was questioned, or (as we speak) *their cobby-hold toucht*, by the mention of the Gentiles, whom they greatly despised, and judged themselves so much above. *Hearken to this, to this pinching word, to the word that strikes upon your lusts. The length of a Sermon spoiles the patience of some, but the strength and searching power of it, spoiles the patience of more. A sincere heart is willing to hear all, and is most pleased to hear that word, which gives deepest wounds to any corruption of heart or transgression of life.* Such words are wholesome, though bitter or sharp, and the more they make us smart, the more medicinal and healing they are. *Hearken unto this, O Job,*

1725
Stat, sc. per
mentu reditu-
dinem. Aquin.

Stand still and consider the wonderous works of God.

Elihu not only desires Job to hearken, but to stand still and consider.

There

There is a twofold *standing still*.

First, Bodily. I do not conceive *Elihu* imposing any such gesture or compolure upon *Job*, as to stand still and not stir his body. The Hebrew is but one word, *stand up*. There is a liberty as to any comly gesture of the body in hearing; a man may lawfully sit as well as stand and hear, *yet to stand up and hear, sheweth a readinesse of the mind, and a hungry desire after the Word.*

Secondly, There is a *standing still* of the mind. The body may stand as still as a stake or stone, while the mind is in strong motion, yea, while there are most vehement commotions and perturbations in the mind. This still-standing of the mind in hearing what is spoken may be taken in a double opposition.

First, To any impatience, unquietness or uncomposedness of the mind when the word is spoken.

Secondly, To any irreverence, slighting or disregarding of the word spoken. To stand still is to get the spirit quiet, to hear patiently; or to stand still is to get the heart into a reverential frame, to hear affectionately. *So then, to stand still implieth both patience and reverence.* We have like admonitions in the 30th chapter of this book (*vers. 20.*) and chapter 32d (*vers. 16.*) Yea, that admonition of *Balaam* was of like sence with this (*Num. 23. 18.*) *Rise up Balak, and hear.* When *Balaam* was about to deliver his parable, and declare the mind of God concerning *Israel*, he called upon *Balak* to rise and stand up, that is, to entertain the message with respect. *Hearken unto this, O Job, stand still.*

Hence note;

We ought to be in a gracious quietness and compolure of spirit when we are called to hear and mind what God hath done or spoken.

Further, *We ought to have a quiet, sedate, composed spirit, not only when we hear doctrinal truths delivered from the word of God, but also when we hear of the providences and various works of God.* As this word, *stand still*, may refer to the words going before, *Hearken unto this*, so to those which follow, *Consider the wonderful works of God*: And then the duty required in them reaches both his Word and Works. *It is a great power of grace which causeth the heart to stand still in this sence, that is, to be*

be in a quiet frame when the works of God trouble us, or are troublesome to us. Thus *Moses* bespake the *Israelites* (*Exod. 14. 12.*) *Stand still, and see the salvation of God.* It was a very troublesome time with the *Israelites*, they were ready to give themselves and all they had for lost, when *Moses* exhorted them to *stand still*. Nothing but faith in God can make us stand still when we are ready to fall, and that will certainly do it. Unbelief makes the heart as unquiet as theirs was upon the report of a war against *Judah* (*Isa. 7. 2.*) *And his heart* (that is, the heart of *Ahaz*) *was moved, and the heart of his people as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.* 'Tis hard travel of soul to stand still and see the salvation of God, when every thing seen threatens deflation. The Lord is represented requiring us to do so (*Psal. 46. 10.*) *Be still, and know that I am God.* When the Psalmist had spoken of the desolating works of God, he added this word from the Lord, *be still*; as if he had said, the Lord commandeth you to be of a quiet and composed spirit, when all things seem to be in a hurry or confusion; for, he had said before (*vers. 8.*) *Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth!* Yet even now (saith the Lord) *Be still, and know that I am God.* *David* at the beginning of the Psalm had professed a firm purpose in himself and in all the faithful with him, for such a still-standing, how-ever things moved or matters should go, yea, tumble in this world (*vers. 1, 2.*) *Though the earth be moved, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though the waters thereof roar, &c. We will not fear, God is our refuge and strength.* How comely is it for man thus to stand still in a silent and believing consideration of what God hath done or is doing; to which *Elihu* called *Job* expressly, in the next words, *stand still*;

Consider the wonderful works of God.

Here is, First, Consideration.

Secondly, Consideration of the works of God.

Thirdly, Consideration of the wonderful works of God.

התחבב
א בול intelli-
gere.

To consider, is the special work of the Understanding, or of the intellectual Powers. To consider, is the most proper work of a rational creature. It is no easie matter to consider our selves, what we are, and what we have done, or what we are doing (*Hag. 1. 7.*) *Consider your wayes*: But 'tis a harder matter to

con-

conſider God, as good in his being and nature, and as good in his workings & operations. That's the buſineſs of this text, *Conſider the wonderful works of God*; conſider them in the fullneſs of them, and conſider them fully. In which ſence the Prophet reproves the Jews for their non-consideration, *Israel doth not know, my people do not conſider* (Iſa. 1. 3.) They do not conſider what I have done, nor what I am doing; they are an inconsiderate and regardless people, and therefore a people not to be regarded. There's nothing worth the taking notice of in a people or perſon, who take no notice of the works of God. They who will not conſider his doings will quickly be inconsiderable, and of no account with him. *Conſider the wonderful works of God.*

Conſideration is oppoſed to two things;

First, To ſlightneſs of Spirit, or the light paſſing over of what we hear or ſee.

Secondly, to unquietneſs and paſſionateſs of ſpirit, becauſe of what we hear or ſee. Some lightly paſs things by, others think of the works of God in a paſſion, or with a kind of rage; they are rather vexing themſelves about the wonderful works of God, than conſidering them. *Conſideration is a work that ſtands between theſe two extreames, ſlightneſſe and unquietneſſe of ſpirit.* Conſideration requires a ſerious ſoul, and if right, it makes the ſoul patient. They who once conſider the works of God rightly, will reſt in them ſatisfiedly. *Conſider the wonderful works of God.*

Elibu was ſpeaking of thoſe works of God in the Air, the Meteors, Clouds and Rain, &c. as under the rule of his providence; now ſaith he, *Conſider*

The wonderful works of God.

This informs us, that the works of God are very conſiderable.

First, In natural things; that is, what God doth in diſpoſing the courſe of nature, muſt be doely conſidered by man.

Secondly, In civil things, that is, in what he doth in ordering the affaires of men; and theſe either publick in Nations, or private in Families: In all theſe God hath his workings, and his works in all muſt be conſidered.

Thirdly, In ſpiritual things, what he doth in wayes of grace upon the ſouls of men, in convincing and converting them, in hum-

bling and comforting them, which are his choicest and most excellent works of all. Now, though all these works of God are to be considered, *the last especially*; yet the works of God here set before *Job*, are those in Nature, and the providential disposal of them: these are no small matters; *Elihu* calls them, and so they are, wonderful;

Consider the wonderful works of God.

These works of God in and about natural things, may be distributed into those that are common and ordinary, or those that are rare and extraordinary. *Elihu* is not treating here about the rare, extraordinary works of God, but about the common and ordinary works of God in the Clouds, the Rain and Winds, &c. yet he calls them wonderful; Consider (saith he) the wonderful works of God.

From the connexion, in that *Elihu* bids *Job* stand still, and then consider the wonderful works of God;

Observe, First;

We can never consider things aright, till our minds come to a rest and are quiet.

We cannot make a true use of our reason, when we are much moved with passion; we must stand still before we can consider. *Moses*, when the bush burned and did not consume; said, *I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt,* (Exod. 3. 3.) He went near and stood, considering that wonderful work of God; He was not in a fright, he was not scared to see a burning bush, but he stood in a well composed frame of mind, to consider what his eyes beheld, or the meaning of that strange sight.

Secondly, Note;

The works of God are matter of great consideration.

As the word of God is to be considered, so his works, and none can profitably consider the word of God, unless they consider the works of God too; His works are a Comment upon his word, the word of God is exemplified in his works; what God speaketh that he doth. We may find the word of God transcribed in his works, I (saith *David*, Psal. 77. 12.) will meditate also of all

all thy works, and talke of thy doings. The Character given of a godly man (*Psal. 1. 2.*) is, *He meditates in the Law of God night and day*; and (*Psal. 119. 148*) *My eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word.* Now a godly man should meditate the word, to the works of God night and day. David was resolved to do so in the place before-mentioned; as also (*Psal. 143. 5.*) *I (saith he) remember the dayes of old, I meditate on all thy works: I muse on the work of thy hands.* Did we rightly consider the works of God, how just, how good they are, we would be more in doing good works, and we should do our good works better. If any ask, How are we to consider the works of God? I answer,

First, Consider them in their number, that they are many. The wonderfull works of God are innumerable; he doth not only one, not only two or three, but many, very many wonderfull works: *Mary, O Lord my God (saith David, Psal. 40. 5.) are the wonderfull works which thou hast done.*

Secondly, Consider the wonderfull works of God in their kinds or sorts, works of Creation, or works of Providence. The works of God in Providence are very various; His works in the Heavens, & his works on the Earth, his works of judgment, and his works of mercy, his works of patience, & his works of vengeance, his works in delivering us from evill, and his works for the continuance of our good, are very various; and tis our duty to consider them all. Whatsoever, or howsoever God is pleased to work, the thoughts of man should work upon it, and give him the glory of it.

Thirdly, The works of God are to be considered, as in their number and kinds or sorts, so in their circumstances. As we are to consider our sin, not only in their kind, but circumstances, which exceedingly aggravate and heighten sin; so circumstances in the works of God must be considered, for they exceedingly heighten the works of God: As the circumstances of a sin may make a sin, little for the matter, very great and exceeding sinfull; so a circumstance in any work of God may make it (though little in it self) great and wonderfull. We leave out the very strength of a work of mercy, when we passe by the circumstances of it: A work of mercy done in such a time, in such a way, a work done for such a people, for a people so undeserving, renders the work much

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more considerable, and valuable. *The Lord* (saith David, Psal. lxxi. 4.) *hath made his wonderfull works to be remembred.* The old translation saith, *The mercifull and gracious Lord hath so done his marvellous works,* that puts a *so* upon his works, he hath not only done them, but, *he hath done them so*, in such a way, with such circumstances, he hath put such marks, such accents upon them, that *they are to be remembred*, that they cannot but be remembred. It is but an half consideration of the works of God, to consider them abstractly and nakedly, without their cloathings, that is, their circumstances of time, place, persons, when, where, how, for whom, and by whom they were done.

Fourthly, We should consider the works of God, in their aims, ends, and tendencies; not only what they are, but what they lead to, what the purpose of God may be in them, with respect to our selves, with respect to the Church, with respect to the world, is very considerable. There is not a drop of rain that falls from Heaven, but it hath a purpose in it, and that not only to feed and nourish man by making the earth fruitfull, but to make our hearts and lives fruitfull.

Or thus, We are to consider the works of God in their aims, First, as to God, to set forth his power, wisdom, goodness. Secondly, as to man; First, to draw man nearer to God; Secondly, to raise him up in thankfulness; Thirdly, in holiness and conformity to the will of God. Now, if this be to consider the works of God, then we may inferre;

Though there be many who see the works of God, yet there are but few who consider them. It is an easie thing to see the works of God, that's only eye-work, but to consider them is difficult, that's head-work and heart-work too. Though I conceive, that word rendred to *see*, is sometimes used in the sence of this Text, for consideration (Isa. 26. 11.) *When thy hand is lifted up they will not see.* They could not choose but see with their eyes, that such things were done, but they did not see, or rather would not see, as seeing notes considering, the hand and aime of God in doing them: They who have no mind to answer and submit to, to profit by, and conforme to the works of God, have no care, nor will they take the pains, to get such a sight of them. *So that while most see the works of God ocularly, while they see the outside, the bulke and body of them, they see not the works of God spiritually,*

no nor so much as rationally. 'Tis not a glance of the eye, but the study of the min. which is required in seeing the works of God. And hence it is that though there are store of spectators and talkers of the works of God, yet there are few considerers of them. Every one almost will be speaking of the great things which God doth, saying, What do you hear? or do you not hear what is done, what is come to passe? but where is the consideration of what is done, or of what hath passed? who stayeth his thoughts, and breathes wisely upon the works of God? They are wise indeed who do so, as *David* concluded, after a long and most excellent discourse of the works of God, (*Psal.* 107. 43.) *Who is wise and will observe these things* (as if he had said, None but the wise will nor can observe them) *even they shall understand the loving kindnes of the Lord.*

Thirdly, What are those works which *Elihu* here calls the wonderfull works of God? Surely those described both in the foregoing and sublequent part of this Chapter are (which are no prodigies in Nature) the Winds, Rain, Frost, Snow, Thunder and Lightning: These are the matter of his discourse, and of these he saith *Consider the wonderfull works of God.*

Hence observe;
The common, constant, and ordinary works of God, are full of wonders.

Though we rightly distinguish the works of God (as was touched before) into ordinary and extraordinary, common and wonderfull, yet did we fully understand them, there is a kind of wonder and miraculoufness in all the works of God, even in his most common, ordinary, or every dayes works. What is more ordinary and common than the generation and formation of man, Yet (saith *David*, *Psal.* 139. 15.) *I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.* And the reason why we do not look out the wonders of that and of many other common works of God, is, because they are so common. The very falling of the Rain hath a wonder in it, the blowing of the Wind hath a wonder in it, the motion of the Clouds hath a wonder in it, the growing of every spire of grafs out of the earth hath a wonder in it, the budding out of every leaf and blossom on the tree hath a wonder in it; yet because

*Magnitudo
rerum consue-
tudo subleuit:
In enim com-
positis summa,
ut nos, quod di-
citur etiam ad-
mirabile dig-
na sunt, manes-
ant. Sen: l. 7.
Nat: quæst:
c. 11.*

*Sol spectato-
rem, nisi cum
deficit, non ha-
bet; nemo ob-
servat lunam,
nisi laboran-
tem.*

cause these things are common, we do not think nor call them wonderfull. Every one would think it a wonder to see a dry rod, a rod cut off from the tree, blossom, as *Aarons* did (*Numb. 17. 8.*) but who thinks it a wonder, to see a tree well rooted in the earth blossom every Spring? yet there is a wonder, a wonderfull work of God in that also. A Heathen Philosopher could say from his own observation of things and persons, Custom takes away admiration. Such is the genius or spirit of mankind, that we never admire what we often see or meet with, though in it self it be never so admirable. Who admires the motion of the Sun every day? yet the Sun's motion every day is as miraculous and stupendious, as its standing still was in that day of *Jeshua's* battel with the Kings, or as its retrograde motion or going back was in that day of King *Hezekiah's* recovery from a mortal disease. That such a vast body as the Sun, should take and fulfill such a journey, should pass such an unconceivable space in twenty-four houres, is an amazing wonder, yet no man wonders at it. It hath been said, *The Sun and Moon have hardly any beholders* (they can scarcely get a look from us) *unless when Eclipsed*, and then all men stand gazing and wondering at them, every one will be looking towards them with hands lifted up, & say, *O strange!* yet the Eclipses of the Sun & Moon are far easier to the conceptions of Reason, than the motion of the Sun and Moon is, considering the vast course they run and performe every day. We admire things out of course, or when their course is disturbed, yet the constant course of things is much more admirable; every time the Sun riseth, every time the rain falleth, every time the wind bloweth, every time the tyde turneth, we have a wonderfull work of God presented to our contemplation. Though Astronomers and Philosophers have spoken much of the reason or cause of these things, yet they cannot reach the bottom of them. The *Stoicks* differ from the *Peripateticks*, each having probable and plausible arguments for their opinion about naturall things; yet none of them hit the matter fully, because there is a wonderfulness in them which God is pleased to hide from man, as also because they were not at all guided by a divine Light in the disquisition of them, but meerly by humane reason and naturall understanding.

Let this be remember'd, The ordinary works of God have wonders in them. I shall conclude this poynt with paralleling the
extraor-

extraordinary and ordinary works of God, as to the reall wonderfulness of them, by two Scripture miracles. The stopping of the fire from burning the *three Children*, was a wonderfull work of God; so also is the making of such a creature as *burning Fire*, yet who wonders at it? It was a wonderfull work of God to stop the mouthes of those hungry Lyons from devouring *Daniel*; so also is the making of a devouring Lyon, yet who wonders at it? Now, seeing there are wonders even in the ordinary works of God,

We may take much comfort in our straits, for 'tis no hard matter with God to work wonders; he works some for us every day, they are his daily works. If we need a miracle to save us in an eminent danger, God can do it; when we see no means in the world to produce such an effect, yet we are never the further from it. Gods ordinary works are full of wonder; He doth the hardest things with as much ease, as those which we call and count the easiest.

Elihu having thus awakened the attention of *Job*, and called him in generall to that internal work of consideration about the external works of God, he (I say) having done this, descends to particulars in the next verse, and those which follow.

Vers. 15. *Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his Cloud to shine?*

Here *Elihu* begins to come upon *Job* thick and three-fold (as we say) with his questions, he puts him many questions, and hard ones; and so doth God also, *Chapter* 38th, 39th, and 40th. And as here *Elihu*, so there God poseth or examineth *Job* in the things of Nature. If we look from this verse to the end of Gods discourse with *Job*, we may find this question, *Dost thou know?* put more than twenty times to *Job*. But why are these posing questions put so often? I answer, to humble *Job* and silence him from questioning the dealings of God with him; why did God alter my condition? why have I been thus afflicted? why emptied from vessel to vessel, said *Job*? I would faine know the reason of my sufferings. Well, saith God, answer my questions first; I would know this or that of thee; and so saith *Elihu* in the behalfe of God,

Dost thou know when God disposed them?

The word rendered *dispose*, signifieth to order, direct, appoynt, ^{Ordina-}re, ^{re, statuere, de-}and cernere.

and determine; to dispose is all these. *Doeſt thou know when God disposed*

them?

What? Some refer the *them*, to all that had been spoken of before, to the Clouds, the Rain, the Thunder, the Lightning, the Light; Doeſt thou know when God did order the Clouds to Thunder and Rain, or the Sun to shine? As if he had ſaid, *God disposed of theſe without asking thy advice*; did he acquaint thee with the orders he ſent to the Clouds, or with the commands which he gave to the Lightning and the Thunder? Canſt thou tell when God will work, or what he will work in the Clouds? He may be making preparation for faire weather or ſoule weather there, and thou never the wiſer, but altogether uncertain of what he is about. Thus he humbleth *Job*, & labours to take him off from his murmurings and complainings, as alſo from over-bold queryings and questionings about the providential workings of God with, and towards him, by bringing him under a full conviction of his great inability to underſtand or comprehend the natural works of God, or when God ſet the Law and gave the Rule to or about theſe things; *Doeſt thou know when God disposed them?*

Hence Note;

First, *God did not only make the world, and all the furniture of it, but he diſpoſeth the motions of every creature in it:*

All things move as they are influenced by his power, and directed by his wiſdome. The date of Gods order for diſpoſing the creature is from the beginning, yea from everlaſting. As the model of the Creation, what things ſhould be, was with him from everlaſting, ſo was the model of Providence, how all things ſhould be governed and diſpoſed of. *The government of the world is as much of God as the Creation or giving of it a being.* From the Starrs in Heaven, to the Wormes creeping upon the Earth, all creatures were and are guided in their courſe by him; he hath ſet them bounds which they cannot paſſe, and ſent out his word to them which they faile not to obſerve. Heathens, generally, did not acknowledge God to be the Maker of the world, nor did they acknowledge him the diſpoſer of it, but aſcribed all the viciffitudes here below to blind Fortune, or to uncertain
Chance

Chance. *Aristotle*, the fore-man, the wisest of that rank, thought *the World was eternal*; he could not find how it had a beginning, and therefore concluded it had none: yet others of the wise Hea-then had a notion that there was a beginning, that there was a first-worker, but when or how he wrought they could not tell. And as the wisest men, who had but the light of nature and reason to teach them, were very dark about the beginning of all things, so also about their motion, they thought that all things either moved of themselves, or that the supreme Power having put Nature into a course, it acted alone, so that God never med-
 led about particulars. Whereas we are taught and assured, by this Scripture-Text, and many more, that God not only made all things, but disposeth all things, even to the fall of a Sparrow upon the ground, or to the loss of an hair of the head (*Math. 10. 20.*) Christ saith also (*John 5. 17.*) *My father worketh hitherto, and I work.* *Creation was a wo k ended in six dayes, but Providence is a wo k that never ends; thus God alwayes worketh, though alwayes at rest.* That's the lesson here intended.

It may be matter of much comfort to us, that all things are ordered by God, that he disposeth of Thunder and Lightning, of Rain and Wind, of Snow and Frost; much more may it comfort us, that he disposeth the affaires of men, of his Church and People. *Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world* (*Acts 15. 18.*) and therefore the Prophet brings in the Lord thus speaking of himself (*Isa. 46. 9, 10.*) *I am God and there is none else, I am God and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done.* He that knoweth what the end of all things will be, must needs dispose of all second causes, and intermediate acts leading thereunto. The reason why men often mis-reckon and faile of their expectation about the ends and issues of things, is, because they have not all the means in their power, yea, I may say, they have not any of the means fully, no nor at all in their own power. *The way of man is not in himself*, how then can his ends be? only God knoweth what shall be the conclusion, because he hath the full dispose of all the premises, means, and wayes, by which the conclusion is brought about. *Let us adore and consider the power of God, as well in disposing of the creature, as in making of it.*

Again, *Doest thou know? &c.*

Surely thou doest not. The question here, as often elsewhere, carrieth in it a strong denial.

Hence Note;

Men know little of the works and wayes of God.

Some men are called *knowing*, and others *ignorant*, but all men are deficient in their knowledge both of the nature and works of God. *Doest thou know?* But was *Job* some ignorant simple person? Surely no, *Job* was one of the wisest as well as greatest men of that age, he was as well versed as any in the study and knowledge both of natural and spiritual things; Nor is he charged by *Elihu* here with ignorance simply, but with ignorance *as to this*, this was too high and too hard for him. *We may with reverence enough question their knowledge in some things, who are very knowing men in most things.*

There are some things which 'tis a shame for a man not to know. The Apostle speaks often in that language (*Rom. 2. 4.*) *Desp'st thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?* What a shame is it that any who know any thing should not know and understand the scope of the mercy of God to sinners; What! knowest thou not, that forbearance leads to repentance? Again, the same Apostle in the same Epistle puts the like upbrayding question (*Rom. 7. 1.*) *Know ye not (for I speak to them that know the Law) how that the Law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth.* He is not worthy to be reckoned as a piece of mankind, who is altogether unknowing; nor is he worthy to be reckoned among the men of his profession, who knows not the common principles of it. While the Apostle spake to those who knew the Law; he presumed they were not ignorant of that Rule in Law, that the Law which hath or should have dominion over all men living, hath no dominion over any man beyond this life. Now (I say) as it is a shame for any man not to know those things which are required of him, and specially concern him, so 'tis a presumption for any man to seek the knowledge of those things which are purposely reserved and hidden from him, (*Deut. 29. 29.*) *Secret things belong to God, revealed things to us and to our children.*

children. Christ saith of the latter day, of the day of Judgment, (*Math. 24. 36.*) *Of that day and howe knoweth no man, no not the Angels of Heaven, but my Father only:* and he reproved the curiosity of his Apostles immediately before his ascension, for enquiring after that kind of knowledge (*Acts 1. 7.*) *It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power.* As it is not profitable, so not lawfull for us to look after the knowledge of those things, which God hath locked up and kept secret. Let us take heed we be neither fowle unknowing in those things which it is a shame for us not to know, nor curiously prying into the knowledge of those things which are restrained from our knowledge. But (to the present poynt) it may be much matter of humiliation to us, that of those things which we have a liberty, and 'tis our duty to know, we know so little. *Job* had free liberty to know, and search after the knowledge of those things about which *Elihu* put his questions, the Meteors of the air, and the motions of those superiour bodies; yet *Elihu* knew he could say little in answer to these questions, when he asked him, *Doest thou know?* &c. And therefore his purpose was to humble *Job*, while he made him see and know his own ignorance. And did the most knowing man in the world know his own ignorance, that would (I am sure it might) make him very humble. We are apt to be very proud of a very small portion of knowledge, a little puffs us up; whereas the sense of our defects in knowledge may both make and keep us little in our own eyes: We should be thankfull for that little which we know, and humble because we know so little.

Elihu having by the Question now opened, convinced *Job* in in general that he knew but little of the works of God, proceeds in the close of this verse, and further forwards, to convince him further of his defectiveness in knowledge, by putting the same question about many other particulars: And the first particular about which he puts the same question, is the Light of the Cloud; *Doest thou know when God disposed them,*

And caused the light of his Cloud to shine?

He questions *Job* again about another poynt, the weighing the Clouds (*v. 16.*) *Doest thou know the ballancing of the Clouds, the wonderfull works of him that is perfect in knowledge?* As if he

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had

had said, Gods causing the light of his Cloud to shine, and his balancing the Clouds, are wonderfull works, even the wonderfull works of him who is perfect in knowledge; and tell me Job, Doeſt thou know theſe things? Doeſt thou know when God diſpoſed them,

And cauſed the light of his Cloud to ſhine?

We muſt here repeat the former queſtion; and, Doeſt thou know when God cauſed the light of his Cloud to ſhine? yea, ſome read this latter part of the verſe in dependance upon the former; Doeſt thou know when God diſpoſed them, that he might cauſe the light of his Cloud to ſhine? But I rather take it as a diſtinct Queſtion. In which, conſider, he doth not ſay, That he may cauſe the light of his Sun, but of his Cloud, to ſhine. 'Tis the Sun properly that ſhineth, Clouds do not: The Sun is the Candle of the World, the receptacle and veſſel of light. Clouds are but veſſels or receptacles of water, they are not properly diaphanous, but opacous, or groſſe, thicke bodies: How then is it here ſaid, He cauſeth the light of his Cloud to ſhine? I anſwer, The Cloud doth not ſhine by any con- natural or intrinſick light, but by that which is adventitious, and accidental to it. And,

וַיִּבֹרֶץ אֱלֹהִים
Splenduit in-
claruit.

There is more in that word *ſhine*, than the ordinary ſhining of the Sun; the Hebrew root ſignifies not only to ſhine, but to break forth with ſhining in ſome very illuſtrious manner) *Deu. 33. 2.* The Lord came from Sinai, and roſe up from Seir unto them, he ſhined forth from Mount Paran. Moſes carrieth a metaphor or borrowed ſpeech quite through the verſe, repreſenting God as the Sun ſhining forth and ſhewing himſelf to the people of Iſrael, in three ſeveral places, & as it were in as many diſtinct degrees of glorious manifeſtation. His glory ſhined firſt from Mount Sinai, where he gave the Law. Secondly, from Mount Seir or Edom, where (as I may ſay) he gave the Goſpel, commanding Moſes to make a Brazen Serpent, that they who looked on it might be cured of the poiſonous wounds given them by the fiery Serpents, (*Numb. 21.*) An illuſtrious type of Chriſt (*Job. 3. 14.*) Thirdly, the glory of the Lord ſhined from Mount Paran, where Moſes, by command from the Lord, made repetition of the Law, adding ſundry Evangelical explications of it. In all which the Lord ſhined forth with a glorious brightneſs, infinitely exceeding that of the Sun. David in three of his *Pſalms* ſpeaking of the wonder-
full

full appearances and discoveries of God, First, to save his people; Secondly, to judge and destroy his enemies, useth this word which here we translate *shine*, (Psal. 50. 1.) *The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken and called the Earth from the rising of the Sun, to the going down of the same; out of Zion the perfection of beauty God hath shined.* That beauty with which God shines out of Zion in the divine splendor and holiness of his worship and ordinances is very glorious. Again, (Psal. 80. 1.) *Give ear O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock, thou that dwellest between the Cherubims, shine forth;* that is, declare thy self in thy mighty power, as it followeth (vers. 2.) *Before Ephraim Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up thy self, and come and save us.* And as the gracious appearances of God for the saving of his people, so likewise the dreadful appearances of God for the destruction of his enemies, are exprest by this word (Psal. 94. 1.) *O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth, O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thy self:* The Hebrew is (and so we put it in the Margin) *shine forth.* Thus the word notes no ordinary shining, but shining both with vengeance, and with salvation; which latter falls in well with the Interpretation of the light shining in the Cloud, which I shall open a little further.

And causeth the light of his Cloud to shine.

There are three Interpretations of these words.

First, Some by the *light of the Cloud*, understand the lightning, which (all know) breaks through the Cloud, and shines out wonderfully before it Thunders. The light of lightning is a wonderful light.

Secondly, Others understand, by the *light of his Cloud*, the light of the Sun scattering the Cloud, and as it were, turning the Cloud into light, making light where none was, or nothing but a thick dark Cloud.

Thirdly, Several learned Interpreters expound the *light of his Cloud*, by the *Rainbow*, which is also a very illustrious light, and that is eminently the *light of Gods Cloud*, 'tis his light in the Cloud. We may also call it a light of the Cloud; for though the light of the Sun falleth upon the clouds, yet the light of the Sun at other times is not so properly called the light of the Cloud, as the light of the Rainbow is, or as when the light of the Sun, reflecting

*Scilicet quod de-
no nubem effec-
ti diffusum ac
ei diffusa se-
renitatem in-
vestiunt.*

*Merc:
Ira est lux in
nube torida et
egregium opus
dei: de illa tra-
lumus expone-
re, cum ante
fulguris men-
tionem fecerit.*

from Scult.

from or upon the Cloud, causeth that Meteor, which we call the Rainbow; and therefore 'tis emphatically exprest by this circumlocution, *the shining of the light of his Cloud*. The shining light of the Rainbow hath in it a great appearance of God, for the help, salvation, and deliverance of his people, 'tis a token of the good-will of God to man. And that we should rather expound this place of the Rainbow, than either of the Lightning, or the Sun-shine; I shall briefly give these foure Reasons, upon which I ground the Exposition.

First, *Elihu* had spoken of the Lightning and of the Sun-shine in the former parts of his discourse, and therefore it is not probable that he should return to either so soon.

Secondly, In this whole philosophical Lecture of *Elihu*, wherein he enters into the treasures of these lower Heavens, there is no mention at all of the Rainbow, unless we fix it upon this place; therefore seeing he had spoken of the Lightning and of the Sun-shine, in the former parts of his discourse, and speaks not at all afterward of the Rainbow, it is most probable that he intends it here.

Thirdly, He is speaking of the wonders of God in the Clouds; and surely his discourse would have been imperfect, if he had omitted this, which as some exprest it, is the most wonderfull of wonderfull things among the Clouds, and one of the great secrets in Nature; I say he should have omitted a great part of that which belongs to the doctrine of the Meteors (all Meteorological Writers particularly handling this Doctrine of the Rainbow) if it be not found here.

We may take a fourth Reason of this Exposition, because this light is said to shine *in his Cloud*; 'tis true, all Clouds are his, that is, Gods Clouds; but the Cloud in which the Rainbow doth at any time appear, is in a way of peculiarity and higher significance called *the Cloud of God, or Gods Cloud*. All the Clouds are as Gods Bow, out of which he shoots his Arrows and Bolts; they are also called *the Seat of God*, on them he sitteth as upon his Throne. Again, they are called *his Chariot*, on them he rideth in his Majesty; but the Rainbow-cloud, is, as it were, the *Royal Robe or Diadem of God*, the special Clothing of God. The Lord saith at the 13th verse of the 9th of *Genesis*, where we have the first mention of the Rainbow, *I do set my Bow in the Cloud*; the Bow is Gods, and the

Mirabilium
mirabilissi-
mum; Naturæ
arcanum.
Græci vocant
iridem Than-
mantias, et
ὁ σωυατος
ab admiratione,
rum admirabi-
lem figuram in
ære exprimat.

the Cloud is Gods, he is entitled to them both in a very eminent and special manner. God calleth it *his Cloud*, and *his Bow*; Not only, First, because he made the Cloud, & the Sun-beams by which the Bow is made. But, Secondly, and chiefly, because he hath put it to a special use, and given it a mystical signification.

And therefore here we may take notice, that whereas the Rainbow is naturally a sign of Rain, for it is alwayes accompanied with Clouds, or at least with a Cloud ready to dissolve and melt into Rain; and is therefore called by the Poet (*Nuncia Junonis, Virg. Æneid. 4.*) the *Harbingresse of Juno*: yet on the contrary God appoynts it as a sign of faire weather. And indeed God often works by contrary means, lest we should stick in means, and ascribe the effect, more than is due, to them. So then the Rainbow hath two different significations, the first natural, of Rain, nor doth God promise to hinder or alter this course of nature. Secondly, preternatural or instituted, of faire weather; which Philosophy, and the world, is altogether ignorant of; only the Church and people of God understand it by faith upon the testimony or revealed will of God, that as often as the Bow appeareth in the Cloud, they have a renewed assurance that God will remember the Earth, and moderate the Rain: nor doth this depend upon the nature of, or various colours appearing in the Rainbow, but purely upon the will and institution of God. And therefore we ought by a firme faith to embrace the word of promise, to which this sign is annexed; without that, the Rainbow is nothing else to us, but the image or representation of the rayes of the Sun or Moon, impressed upon the Clouds.

I shall not insit upon any large discourse of the Rainbow, only rake two or three things. This Meteor hath three Attributes above the rest; First, it is the most illustrious and beautifull; Secondly, the most desirable and comfortable; Thirdly, the most strange and wonderfull of all the impressions visible in the air. This is properly expressed by a Bow, because the forme of it usually is semicircular. *Luther* saith he saw a Rainbow in the forme of a perfect Circle; and others report they have seen it in the forme of a strait line: But in what-ever form it appears, the natural cause of it is the reflection of the Sun or of the Moon (for there are Rainbows in the night as well as in the day) it is caused; I say, by the reflection of the light of the Sun or Moon) upon or from a
watery

q^ua ab e^{is} p^{ar}tib^{us}
quod est dicere
ve loqui. Iris
est arcus, qui
est reflexione
luminis, cum so-
laris tum luna-
ris, in nubem
vividam opposi-
tam gignitur.
Garcæ.

tery or dewey Cloud opposite to either. The Latine word *Iris*, is derived from a greek word, which signifieth to speak or to relate something: The Rainbow is elegantly so called, because it foreshews sometimes rain, sometimes faire weather. A Rainbow in the morning is a sign of showres, in the afternoon it betokens serenity, and alwayes it proclaims to us the promise of God for the moderation of rain; or it speaks thus much to all the world, that God will so measure out the Rain from the Clouds, that it shall never swell to an universal Deluge, or to a drowning of the whole world again. Thus the Rainbow hath a speech, a language of mercy in it towards the present world. It speaks also the Justice of God upon the old world, minding us of that Deluge of water that drowned them for their sin; they had so defiled the Earth by their evil manners and prophaneſs, by their will-worship, Superſtition and Idolatry, that God in wrath sent a Flood of water, *not to wash, or refresh, but to destroy them*: The Rainbow minds us of that dreadfull Judgment of God upon a corrupt World. And although the Rainbow gives us assurance that the World shall not be drowned again, how sinfull soever it is, yet some, from the various colours of the Rainbow, whereof one is red and fiery, tell us, it proclaims that the World shall at last be consumed by Fire. The Apostle *Peter* is plain that it shall be so, (2 Ep: 3. 10.) *The Elements shall melt with fervent heat*; nor is it meerly a phancy, to say, that the fiery colours in the Rainbow are set there by God, to mind us of it.

Some have questioned whether the Rainbow were before the Flood or no? The reason or ground of the question is given from that saying of God (Gen. 9. 13.) *I will set my Bow in the Cloud*: it seems then there was no Rainbow before the Flood.

I answer, The Rainbow may be considered two wayes; First, as to its natural being; Secondly, as to its mystical use. If we consider the Rainbow as to its natural being, it was before the Flood, for the causes of it were before the Flood, which are wariery Clouds and the shining of the Sun: *Now when sufficient causes appear in act, the effect doth certainly follow*. But as to its mystical use, it was not before the Flood. Water had its natural elementary being and use, before Baptisme was instituted, but it had not a spirixual use till then: we may say the same of the Rainbow. Some I know of the Moderns, *Luther* and *Melancthon* asser,

it

it was not in being till then ; but we have reason to vary from that opinion, with reverence to those worthy men : For God did not say in the 9th of *Genesis*, I will make or create my Bow in the Cloud, but, *I do set my Bow in the Cloud, and it shall be there for a token of a Covenant between me and the Earth.* The Rainbow had no such signification, nor was it set in the Cloud for any such purpose, before that time. So then,

Take the Rainbow as to its mystical use, so I grant, it was not before the Flood ; till then God had never caused the light of his Cloud to shine as a Covenant-token. The Rainbow, had alwayes a natural signification in it, but that is not all, it hath now also a Theological, divine and mystical signification, and is become as the Seal of that Covenant with mankind ; for God instituted the Rainbow as a Sacramental sign (so we may expresse it for our better understanding) both between himself and the whole World in general, and in special between himself & his Covenant people (*Gen. 9. v. 12, 13, 14, 15.*) It was given (I say) on purpose to Seal the truth of the Promise, that the whole Earth should no more be overwhelm'd with a Deluge or Flood of water : Which though it be such a promise as the whole Creation hath the benefit of, yet the faithfull only understand the mysterie of it, and have their faith exercised upon it, and strengthened by it. So that while the Rainbow is the sign of a temporal Covenant to all creatures, the godly may look upon it, with reference to all spiritual and eternal mercies by Christ, in whom all the promises of mercy are *Yea and Amen*, (*2 Cor. 1. 20.*) And there is a great fitness in it to hold forth mercy both temporal and spiritual, in several particulars.

First, This Rainbow is in the Cloud, and God placed it in the Cloud, because out of the Cloud came the Rain which drowned the old world. God could have drowned the world only by letting out, or breaking up the Springs of water from the earth, but he opened the Cataracts of Heaven also to do it. And therefore God, to secure the world against such another vengeance from the Clouds, put his Bow in the Cloud.

A second significancy of mercy in the Rainbow, is, because the Bow is bended upwards, or Heaven-ward, the Bow doth not stand bent to the Earth, or downward, the string of the Bow is towards us, not the back of it. He that would shoot hath the bottom or

A a a a

back

back of the Bow in his hand, and the string is towards himself; but God, that he might shew he doth not intend to shoot that Arrow any more, holds the string of the Bow downwards, which no man doth that hath a mind to shoot. The Lord by this Bow in the Cloud shoots no man, unlesse it be (as one well expresth it) with admiration and love; or I may say, the Lord having shot his Arrowes of immoderate Rain from the Region of the air for mans chastning, seems to return to Heaven with his Bow reversed, as a token of peace and serenity to the world, or that in Judgment he remembers his Covenant-mercy. The wicked are said to *bend their Bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart*, (Psal. 11. 2.) But he that turns the string of his Bow downwards, is not ready, nor seems minded to shoot at all.

Thirdly, This bow shews mercy, because there is no Arrow seen at it, or with it.

*Concipit iris a-
quas alimentaq;
nubibus offert.
Ovid: 1. Me-
tam:*

Fourthly, It sheweth or signifieth mercy, because the Rainbow usually appears when Rain is ready to come, implying that the Rain shall not hurt us; and so we have a support of our faith, as soon as we have any appearance of seare.

Fifthly, When-ever the Rainbow appears, there is clearness in some part of the air; for it cannot be but when the Sun shines. In the time of the Flood the light of the Sun was wholly obscured. All the dayes which the world had during that dreadful Rain, were (like the day described, Joel 2. 2. Zeph. 1. 15.) *dayes of darkness, and of gloominess, dayes of Clouds and of thick darkness*. Therefore 'tis said, (Gen. 8. 22.) *Day and night shall continue for ever*: intimating that in the time of the Flood the day was so obscured, so black, that it could scarcely be known to be day, or distinguished from night. But now when the Rainbow is seen, the Sun shines, to give assurance that though there be an appearance of Rain, yet the light of the day shall not cease.

*Lux in nube
rorida mille ef-
ficat colores et
varias et pul-
cherrimas lu-
cis temperatio-
nes.
Plin: Natur:
Hist: 1. 12.
c. 24.*

Sixthly, The various colours of the Rainbow are very significant for our comfort, making (as some Naturalists have told us) a thousand sweet delights for the eye, by the admirable mixtures and shadowings of colours therein discernable.

Seventhly, The Natural Historian assureth us, that where the Rainbow at any time toucheth the Earth (as we may often observe it doth) it leaveth a fragrant smell upon the grass, shrubs and bushes.

bushes. Thus you see how properly and fully the Rainbow is called *The shining of the light of his Cloud*, as also what significations of favour are discernable in it. From this explication of the words, we may note;

First, *After troubles and stormes, God will give his people comforts and calmes.*

He causeth the light of his Cloud to shine. Clouds are dark things, but while the Cloud thews Rain, Gods light in the Cloud thews faire weather. That's matter of rejoycing to all that fear God, as with respect unto that particular Judgment of the Deluge, so of all evils and troubles which fall upon them in this world. This light shining in the Cloud may comfort and refresh us in the darkest night of sorrow. It is said (*Psal. 97. 11.*) *Light is shone for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart*: And in the 4th of the *Revelations* (which is as it were a Prologue or Preface to all the Prophecies of the dark times that should come upon the world, and over the Church of God in this world) we find Jesus Christ is represented with a Rainbow about him (*vers. 3.*) *I was in the spirit, and behold a Throne set in Heaven, and one sat on the Throne, and he that sat was to look upon like a Jasper and Sardix stone, and there was a Rainbow round about the Throne, in sight like to an Emerald.* From this Throne it is that Jesus Christ doth, as I may say, dispence all the affaires of his Churches and people. Now though Jesus Christ in the providential or mediatorial government of his Churches, doth often send Clouds upon them, and though Clouds and darkness are round about him, yet the Throne hath a Rainbow about it: *And why a Rainbow? to shew that Jesus Christ is mindfull of his Churches and people, to save them when the Serpent casts out Floods to drown them.* 'Tis said (*Rev. 12. 15.*) *The Serpent cast out of his mouth water as a Flood after the Woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the Flood*; but Jesus Christ that sitteth upon the Throne, hath a Rainbow about him, which gives assurance that the Floods shall not quite overwhelm the Church, she shall be delivered, though it be in a Wilderness, from those mighty water-floods of persecution raised and caused by the Serpent and his seed against the seed of the Woman, or against the Woman and her seed. *Though Christ may suffer great Floods of sorrow and tribulation to be powred*

upon them, yet there is a Rainbow about the Throne to which we may look, and get our faith confirmed, that the Woman and her Seed shall not be swallowed up.

Take one place more (*Rev. 10. 1.*) *I saw another mighty Angel coming down from heaven (that was Jesus Christ) cloathed with a cloud (that is, with dark dispensations, such as his people should not well know what to make of; but what follows?) and a Rainbow was on his head.* That Prophecie leads into a description of the greatest pressures and troubles that ever the Church of God was to suffer in this world. Jesus Christ was cloathed with a Cloud, but, for the comfort of his Church, there was a Rainbow on his head, there was light shining in this Cloud, to bear up the spirits of his people, that the mischief should not be to their destruction, though it might be very much not only to their tryal, but correction. And we find the Church supported, though not directly under this notion of a Rain-bow, yet by a promise plainly hinting, if not referring to it (*Isa. 54. 9.*) In the 8th verse the Prophet tells us, that the poor Church was in very great trouble; Why? Surely because of some cloudy providences, which interrupted the light of Gods countenance from shining upon them, at least to their apprehension; for thus he b. spake the Church, *In a little wrath have I hid my face from thee, for a moment (there was the Cloud) but with everlasting loving-kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer (there's the Rain-bow) for this is as the waters of Noah; for as I have sworn the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth (which was signified by the Rain-bow) so have I sworn that I will be no more wrath with thee, nor rebuke thee: For the mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of my peace be removed any more, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.* Then follows, *O thou afflicted and tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and thy foundations with sapphires, and I will make thy windows of agats, and thy gates of carbuncles.* As if he had said, though I have hid my face yet I will return, for this is as the waters of Noah; that is, I have as certainly resolved in my self that this unnatural flood shall not drown thee, as I once promised, and am so resolved still, that the natural flood shall never drown the world again; and mark how he expresth it, *as I have sworne.* When we read the history
in

in *Genesis*, it is not said, that the Lord swore; but the Lord to shew that his word is as good as his oath, tells us that what he spake to *Noah*, was as if he had sworn it, especially seeing he gave such a sign for the performance of it. I might shew from other Scriptures, that God is sometimes represented swearing, when yet we read of no oath formally given: It is said (*Exod.* 32. 13.) God sware to *Abraham* and his Seed; to which the Apostle refers (*Heb.* 6. 13, 17.) *God confirmed it by an oath*; yet if we look those scriptures, *Gen.* 12. 2, 3. *Ch.* 15. 7. *Ch.* 17. 7. we find only the Lord said, &c. The Lords saying is as good that is, as sure as his swearing, and shall as certainly be performed.

For a conclusion of this matter; let it be remembered, that the Lord by *causing the light of his Cloud to shine*, at first gave, and still gives a sign, or a seal to strengthen faith. Signs and seals are appendices to the Covenant, or great Charter of all our mercies. Signs and seales are visible words, God speaks by them to the eye. *I will set my Bow in the Cloud*; God saith, the Bow shall be a sign, he also hath made Water a sign in the holy Sacrament of Baptisme, and he hath made Bread and Wine signes in the holy Sacrament of the Supper; God hath been pleased, from the beginning so far to condescend to mans weakness, as to give him, not only his Word or Promise, but Signes to confirm it. And therefore did the Lord give a sign, because, as himself hath both an all-sufficient power, and full purpose to performe his promise, so he would have the faith of all that are under the Covenant well assured of his faithfulness in performing it.

Thus we see the spiritual usefulness of this interpretation, taking, *the light of his Cloud*, for that illustrious sign the Rain-bow set by God in the Cloud, and most fitly called *the light shining in his Cloud*; which he doth not cause to shine ordinarily or every day as the Sun doth, but at special times, testifying his eminent favour to some, and his care over all mankind. *Knowest thou when he caused the light of his Cloud to shine?* *Elihu* proceeds further with *Job* upon interrogatories.

Vers. 16. *Dost thou know the ballancing of the Clouds, the wonderful work of him that is perfect in knowledge.*

Here's another question. The general scope of all these questions was handled before, I shall now only poynt at that which this question:

Librationes
nubis appellat
elegantior meo
quidem iudicio,
cum in aere ap-
parent velut li-
brantur a Do-
mino. Merc.
וְשֶׁמֶן
Veritatem libra-
mentis, a דָּפַד
ponderavit, ad
veritatem dire-
xit mutata
D in W.

question specially aymes at. Mr. Broughton reads, *Dost thou know the paying of the thick vapours?* This is a wonderful work of God. The Clouds are huge ponderous bodies; who is able to guess how much a Cloud weighs? yet God ballanceth the Clouds, he, as it were, puts them into scales, and knowys what they weigh; he so orders them, that one part doth not over-power the other, but both hang with an even poise in the air; this is a wonderful work of God. *Dost thou know how God doth this?* or, how he makes the Clouds bigger or lesser, how he placeth them higher or lower, according to the service and use to which he hath appoynted them? Can any man do this? Can any man fully understand how such vast bodies as the Clouds should be poised or ballanced? how they hover over our heads, and are kept from falling upon us? We must have recourse to the wisdom and power of God for this. *Dost thou know the ballancing of the Clouds?*

Hence we may infer, First;
If man knoweth not the ballancing of the Clouds, then much less can he ballance them. And

Secondly, Note;
*'Tis by a divine power that the Clouds are upheld and bal-
lanced.*

All heavy things tend downward; what then but God keeps the Clouds up, which are so heavy? 'Tis a wonder that we have not Seas of waters, rather than showers poured upon us from the Clouds. They that travaile far at Sea, see the Rain coming down by spouts, or like a flood in some places; and certainly the Clouds would come down every where like a flood if God did not hold them up. From which particular instance *Elihu* would have us take up this general truth, that,

All things are kept in an even ballance by the wisdom and power of God. The things of the world, if God did not ballance them, how would they tumble and fall away, yet, run to ruine! were there not a ballancing operation in the arm of God, over all the affairs and businesse of men, what a huddle and confusion would all be in? We read in Scripture of foure things which God is said to weigh or to ballance, they are all very considerable.

First, It is said, God weigheth the waters (*Job. 38. 25.*) which may be understood, not only of the waters above in the Clouds,
but

but of the waters also in the Sea; he knows to a dram, to a grain, how much all the waters weigh.

Secondly, Which are also vast things, It is said (*Isa. 40. 12.*) *He weigheth the mountains in scales, & the hills in a ballance.* And as both these are true taken literally, so they are true also if you take them mystically or metaphorically. St John was shewed the judgment of the great whore, in a vision, who sitteth upon many waters (*Rev. 17. 1.*) Who are meant by waters is explained there (*v. 15.*) even *Peoples, and Multitudes, Nations, and Tongues.* The people of the world are compared to waters, and well they may, for their instability; *Unstable they are as water* (*Gen. 49. 4.*) and for their aptness to swell and rise up into floods. Now the Lord weigheth these mysticall Waters, Multitudes, and Nations: he knows exactly what they are, what they would be, and what they would do. And as by waters common people or nations, so by mountaines and hills the great the mighty ones of the nations are exprest; Princes and honourable men are as great mountains. Thus spake the Prophet, *The day of the Lord shall be against the mountains* (*Isa. 2.*) that is, against the mighty men of this world; Hence that deriding question, *Who art thou O great mountain before Zerubbabel?* (*Zac. 4. 7.*) That is, O thou great man, who art thou? surely, thou art not so much as a mole-hil before the God of Zerubbabel, who when he comes down, the mountaines melt down at his presence (*Isa. 64. 1.*) who, if he doth but touch the mountains, they smoke (*Psal. 144. 5.*) as if struck with Thunder. God weighs these mountains of the earth, that is, he considers and understands them exactly. God weighed him who was the greatest mountain, of a man, in his time; *Belshazzar* was the sole Monarch of the earth, he had almost the whole known world at his command, yet the Lord said of him (*Dan. 5. 22.*) *Thou art numbred, thou art weighed, and thou art found too light.*

Thirdly, As God weigheth men of all sorts, so he weigheth the actions of all sorts of men (*2 Sam. 2. 3.*) *By him actions are weighed,* that is, all actions are weighed by him; the least actions are weighed by the mighty God, and so are the greatest, he knoweth how to poyle them, and so make use of them, that they may effect what is answerable to his own counsel and purpose. This is it which the Prophet intended, when he said of the Lord, *Thou most upright dost weigh the path of the Just* (*Isa. 26. 7.*) that is, the motions, and

and goings, or doings of the Just. The pathes of the Just come often into very uneven ballances in this world, every one will be weighing them, one gives this judgement of them, and another that, few hit right, the most of men being either blinded with ignorance of them, or prejudiced with malice against them: But the comfort of the just is, the *most upright weigheth their path*, and will give the just weight of them.

Fourthly and lastly, God weigheth the very spirits of men. *All the wayes of man are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weigheth the spirits* (saith Solomon, Prov. 16: 2.) The Lord doth not only weigh actions and pathes, that is, the whole outward course and teneur of our lives, but he weighs our spirits, that is, the principles from which our actions flow, and by which we are carried on in our pathes; he findes one man to be of a light, of a vain spirit, and another man to be of a proud high spirit, a third to be of a covetous, having, holding spirit; a fourth of *an envious spirit, that cannot bear the good of another*; and a fifth to be of a revengful spirit, that wil do another as much hurt as he can. Again, the Lord by weighing finds out them, whosoever they are, that have a weighty, serious spirit, that have an upright sincere spirit, that have a heavenly gracious spirit; God knowes who they are that have a spirit for the things and wayes of God in the midst of all contradictions of men; and having thus weighed the spirits of men, he disposeth of them and deals with them accordingly. And I may add this to the question in the text, Dost thou know the ballancing of spirits? Surely no, for *thou knowest not the ballancing of the Clouds* (which may be known much easier)

The wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge.

Mr. Broughton renders, *The miracles of the perfect in knowledge*. As if he had said; the shining of the light in his Cloud, and the ballancing of the Clouds, are to be numbred among the wondrous works of him *that is perfect in knowledge*. *The wondrousness of Gods works* was touched at the 14th verse, I shall not stay upon that here; only mark how *Elihu* describes God by a periphrasis or circumlocution; he doth not say the wonderful works of God, but, *the wonderful works of him*

That

That is perfect in knowledge.

This is a description of God, and such a description as will fit none but God; who hath and who only hath, not only knowledge, but the perfection of it. We need not name God, when we speak of him that is perfect in knowledge, it can be meant of none but him. *Elihu*, at the 4th verse of the former Chapter, said to *Job*, *He that is perfect in knowledge* (meaning himself, as that text was expounded) *is with thee*. In what sense *Elihu* might say of himself, that he was perfect in knowledge, was there shewed; and here it must be shewed and confessed, that neither *Elihu* was, nor any, the most knowing, are perfect in knowledge like God, or as God is. The Apostle saith of the best knowers in this world (1 Cor. 13. 9.) *We know in part, and we prophesie in part; we behold darkly as in a glass*. They that have the clearest eye-sight, the purest intellectuals, know but in part, and see but darkly, which is far from perfectly; therefore, I say, this description of perfect in knowledge, hath a peculiar meaning here, proper only to God, as will appear more particularly in opening this Observation from it.

God is not only full of knowledge, but perfect in knowledge; or, The knowledge of God is perfectly perfect.

That's perfectly perfect to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken. Such is the knowledge of God; it is impossible to add any thing to it, and it is as impossible to diminish it: God cannot forget or unlearn any thing already known, nor can he know any more things, no nor any thing more, than he already knoweth; therefore he is perfect in knowledge. More distinctly, the knowledge of God is perfect; For,

First, *He knoweth all things*; what-ever is knowable he knoweth. He knowes

First, All things past.

Secondly, He knowes all things present.

Thirdly, He knows all things to come (*Isa. 46. 10.*) *He declareth the end from the beginning*. Now he that knowes all things past, present, or to come, is perfect in knowledge.

Secondly, He is perfect in knowledge, for he knowes all things at once, in one prospect or by one aspect; he doth not know one thing after another, nor one thing by another, he knows all at once.

B b b b

Thirdly;

Thirdly, He is perfect in knowledge, for he knows all things as they are; he doth not know things according to appearance, only or as they are held forth to be. Many will make fair shews, and offer both themselves and their actions as very good, holy, righteous, religious, yet the Lord who seeth through them, seeth them stark nought quite through (*Heb. 4. 12.*) *All things are naked and manifest to him*: He seeth to the skin, he seeth through cloaks and vizards, yea, he seeth through skin and all, he lookes into the breast; the breasts of men are to him, as if they were cut open, as the word there imports.

Fourthly, He is perfect in knowledge, *For he knoweth all things in himself*. God doth not go out of himself to search here and there for knowledge and information. We run to this and that book, to this and that man, to fetch in knowledge and yet we know but little when we have done all; but the Lord knowes all things in himself, without search or study.

Fifthly, He knowes all things unerringly; he knoweth them so as there is not the least mistake in his knowledge; that's perfect knowledg. How many errors are there in our knowledge? how much darkness in our light? But *God is light, and in him is no darkness at all*.

Sixthly, He knowes all things everlastingly; all things are before him alwayes. Some men quire lose the knowledge of many things which they have known, but all that God knoweth (which is all) abideth in the same clearness and fullness with him for ever.

Seventhly, He knows all things as perfectly as if he had but one thing to know, therefore he is perfect in knowledge. We use to say of a man that hath a knowledge scattered upon many matters, or that is knowing in many Arts, and Trades, and busineses, we say, this man is *something in every thing, and nothing in any thing*; he hath no full knowledge of any one thing, his knowledge being divided upon or among so many things. But such is the perfection of Gods knowledge, that he knowes all things as perfectly as if he had but one thing to know. *To him that is infinite, one and all, is all one*. And from hence (to close up the whole point and this verse) take these five Inferences.

First then, *To know, is to be like God, for God is a God of knowledge*. How unlike God are ignorant persons!

Aliquis in omnibus, nullus in singulis.

Second-

Secondly, *The more perfect our knowledge is, the more like we are to God*, for he is absolutely perfect in knowledge.

Thirdly, If God be perfect in his knowledge, then, *We need not fear any good which we do, unseen of men, shall be lost*, for God sees and knows it. Though your left hand know not what your right hand doth, yet never fear what you have done shall be buried, for God is perfect in knowledge.

Fourthly, If God be perfect in knowledge, *No evil doer hath any ground of hope, that any evil he hath can be hid, though done never so much hiddenly, or in the dark*. God is so perfect in knowledge that to him, darkness is no darkness; the darkness and the light to him are both alike.

Fifthly, If God be perfect in knowledge, *Then he fully knows the needs of his people all the world over*; he knows the state of every one for soul and body. This Christ makes an argument of support in our greatest needs (*Mat. 6. 32.*) *Be not careful what ye shall eat, &c.* be not dispondently careful or fearful about any thing, *for your heavenly father knoweth that ye have need of all these things*. Men in straits use to say, if such a friend did but know of our wants, he would help us. Here is comfort to the people of God, he knows their state in general, and their straits in particular, for he is perfect in knowledge. We may rest assured, that he who hath so perfect a knowledge, mingled with perfect compassions, will in due time give us perfect help out of all our straits, and a perfect supply of all our wants.

J O B, Chap. 37. Vers. 17, 18.

*Dost thou know, &c.*17. *How thy garments are warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south wind?*18. *Hast thou with him spread out the skie which is strong, and as a molten looking-glass?*

THis context sheweth yet further, the utter insufficiency of man to comprehend those wonderful works of God, concerning which *Elihu* spake in the close of the 15th verse. And here we have a conviction of mans insufficiency two ways.

First, In reference to his ignorance of what God doth upon him; *vers. 17. Dost thou know how thy garments are warm? &c.*

Secondly, To his weakness, in giving God any assistance about what he hath done, *vers. 18. Hast thou, with him, spread out the skie which is strong? &c.*

Thus *Elihu* cometh nearer to *Job* than before, not only convincing him of his ignorance in those things which were far above him, but even in those that were about him; not only with respect to the Clouds of heaven, but to the cloathes upon his back. And it hath troubled some Interpreters upon these words, while they considered the seeming lowness and meanness of the matter in question, which here *Elihu* puts to *Job*, as also, how *Elihu* (having discoursed of so many wonderful works of God, in the former part of the Chapter, his wonderful works in Lightning, in Thunder, in Rain and Snow, in the motion of the Winds, in ballancing of the Clouds, and in the admirable aspect and appearances of the Rain-bow; It troubles some Interpreters, I say, to consider how *Elihu*, after a large discourse of these greater matters) should come at last to speak of *Jobs* garments, and the warmth received by them. What cognation or proportion is there between those high and great things above, and the garments which he daily wore? Do these deserve to be reckoned up among the secrets of Nature? or, was *Job* so stupid, that he could not give a reason of their warmth? *Knowest thou*

Vers.

Ver. 17. *How thy garments are warm* ^{the opinion of the} ~~of the~~ ^{the} ~~quieteth~~
the earth by the South wind?

So we are to resume that part of the question out of the former verse, though not expressed here. As there he said expressly, *Dost thou know when God disposed them? dost thou know the ballancing of the Clouds?* So here he saith impliedly, *Dost thou know how thy garments are warm?*

Some make this and the former verse one entire sentence, quite leaving out those words, *Dost thou know*, in the latter part; *Dost thou know the ballancing of the Clouds, O thou whose garments are warm upon thee, when the earth is quieted by the South wind? Hast thou, with him, spread out the Skie, which is strong, and as a molten looking glass?* The meaning of which reading is briefly this; *O thou, who canst not bear thy clothes in a hot day, but art forced to leave thy labour, and retire to thy rest, when the earth is quieted, the Sun being far ascended to the South (that's the time of heat) Didst thou, with him, spread out the Skie, which is strong as a molten looking-glass?* Didst thou work in the Furnace, or in that fiery heat with God, when he did, as it were, like a mighty Founder, cast the whole Heavens into that glorious mould, or form, in which they appear and seem to move? The words are an allusion to those Artificers who work in Mettals, and cast them into Vessels of one sort and size or another, for the several uses & services of man: Such a thing is the Skie over us, which is therefore here compared to a molten looking-glass, that is, to a glass made of molten mettall. Thus, I say, some read the context as one entire sentence, and there is a clearness in it.

But I shall keep to our own reading, and so we have two distinct questions; *Dost thou know how thy garments are warm? Hast thou, with him, spread out the Skie?*

I begin with the first, *Dost thou know*

How thy garments are warm?

Canst thou give an account of that sudden change, whence it is that the South wind ceasing to raise stormes in the earth, there should presently succeed such fervent heat, that thou art not able to bear thy own ordinary clothes? The text is, *that, or how it cometh to pass, that thy garments are warm.* As if Elihu had said, I have

Pro 702
In Exod.
34. 18.

I have dealt about higher and greater matters; I will now put a question to thee which is more familiar, *Canst thou tell me how thy garments are warm?* Surely if thou art not able to give me a clear reason about that, how art thou able to enter into the more reserved secrets of God? tell me, if thou canst, *How thy*

Garments are warm?

פריש
Perfidia, falsitas, mendacium, item vestis, forte quod vestimentum sit privati hominis contra Deum perfidiae regumentum & testimonium. Brix.

The word which we translate *garments*, hath a very considerable significancy in it, coming from a root rendred deceit, falsehood, and a lie. The garments which we wear are both a regument or covering of our nakedness, and a testimony of our perfidiousness and falshood with the great God. Before man sinned he wore no garments, nor had he need to wear any, innocency was his cloathing; nor was the natural man ever so gloriously adorned, deckt and drest, as when he had no garments besides his innocency. When man prevaricated and dealt falsely with God, when he sinned and broke the commandment (his nakedness appearing and his shame) he then got a simple covering, such as he could make for himself of fig-leaves, till God provided him a covering of skins. Garments began with our sin, till then (saith Moses, Gen. 2.) *the man and the woman were both naked, and were not ashamed;* but when once man had sinned, then shame came into the world, and then both God and Nature provided garments to cover his shame. All this the word imports, that we, through sin, having lost our natural garments, our robe of created innocency and integrity, we are constrained by shame to take up these artificial garments or coverings to hide our nakedness. It is not unprofitable for us to remember, that the Spirit of God in the Original language hath expressed our garments by such a word, as leads us to the original of them, our dealing falsely with God and sinning against him. *Dost thou know how thy garments*

חם
Incaluit, calidum fuit; itaque Chami nomen, vel a calore, vel a nigredine factum; Neque ut videretur sine numine, cum quae Chamo contingit Africa immodico aestu laborat. Bochart.

Are warm?

The word which signifieth to heat, or make warm (I note that by the way also) was the name of one of the sons of Noah; he had three, called *Sem, Ham, and Japheth*. *Ham* or *Cham* was that son who saw his fathers nakedness, and told his two brethren without, not grievingly, but deridingly, which brought a curse upon him. This *Cham* had his name from heat; and that portion and part

part of the world which, according to the opinion of the learned, was assigned to the posterity of *Cham*, is one of the hottest climates in the world; the inhabitants of those Countries by reason of the extreame heat of the Sun, being *black*, are called *Blackmores*. And all *Affrica* was called *Ammonia*, either because the Idol of the Sun was worshipped there, or because the Sun-beams are alwayes hot and fiery upon it. Yet as the word notes that extreame heat which causeth blackness, so any moderate heat; *Dost thou know how thy garments are warm?*

Affrica Ammonia dicta, cum ob cultum Ammonis i. e. Solis, tam precipue ob aestus solares quibus exposita est.
Fuller Misc.

From the notation of the word rendred garments,

Observe first;

When we put on our clothes we should remember our sin, or, Our garments are memorialls of our sin.

The covering of our natural nakedness is a discovery of our spiritual; and therefore when we cover our natural nakedness we should think of our spiritual. 'Tis sin alone which makes us shamefully naked. *Moses* saw the people were naked, when they had made the golden Calf (*Exod. 32. 25.*) not that they had no clothes on them, but they had got a new sin upon them, and had lost their former integrity, which was a better ornament than clothing, as also the protection of God, which was a better guard or defence than armour. Our garments, which are an occasion of pride to many, should be an occasion of humiliation to all. Let us take heed of sinning in the use of garments, seeing it was sin that brought in the use of garments. I only mind the reader of it from the notation of the word.

Secondly, What is here said of garments? *Knowest thou how thy garments are warm?* That is, warm thee, or, keep thee warm.

Hence note;

Garments are given for warmth.

That's one use or service of garments. There is a fourfold use of garments.

First, To cover our nakedness and hide our shame.

Secondly, To distinguish our sex, man from woman. The law of *Moses* forbade the man to wear the womans apparel, or the wo-

man.

man the mans (*Dent. chap. 22. vers. 5.*)

Thirdly, Garments are useful for ornament. There are garments of glory and honour, garments to set forth the state and condition, as well as the sex of the person wearing them. Aaron and his sons had garments made them by Gods own appointment, for glory and for beauty. (*Exod. 28. 2, 40.*) The Kings and Princes of the world wear garments becoming their state and Majesty; and inferiour Magistrates have their proper garments, suiting their offices and dignity.

Fourthly, (Which is the common use of garments, and that which the text speaks of) they are for warmth, to keep out the cold, and to defend us from the injuries and violence of the weather; yet we scarce know, or do not fully know, how that comes to pass.

Hence observe, Thirdly ;

How our garments warm us is a secret, and that they warm us is from the blessing of God.

Though there be a natural cause of this warmth, yet there is some-what of God, yea, much of God in it. The effect of that natural cause dependeth wholly upon the concurrence and power of God. That Speech of the Prophet to the *Jewes* newly returned from *Babylon*, and neglecting the Lords house, while they too much attended the building of their own, doth fully evince this for truth (*Haggai 1. 6.*) *Ye have sown much, but bring in little* (naturally they that sow much, should bring in much; but God can stop the influences of the heavens, and the increase of the earth, & though the seed time be great, the harvest shall be small) again, *ye eat* (and then sure they were satisfied ; no, saith the Prophet, *ye eat*) *but ye have not enough* ; which not only implyeth that they had not enough to eat (though that might be a truth) but, that though they did eat enough, yet there was not a nutritive vertue in the meat, it did not content or satisfie the stomach & renew their strength: He adds, *ye drink, but are not filled with drink*, which also implyeth, not only that they had but a little to drink, but that their drink was not comfortable or thirst-quenching to them. Lastly (which is the instance of the text) *Ye cloath you, but there is no warmth*. What was the reason of all this, That they did eat and had not enough, drink and were not filled, put on cloathing and were not warme ? The

text

text gives answer (v. 9.) *Because I did blow upon it, or blow it away;* that is, I sent out a curse which blasted all your creature injoyments, and blowed away the comforts and usual efficacy of them; so that ye had only a shell without a kernel, or only skin and bones without the marrow and fatness of all, my favour and blessing. That our cloaths warm us, as well as that our meat and drink nourish us, is from the blessing of God.

Fourthly, When he saith, *Knowest thou how thy garments are warm?*

Note;

Man cannot give a full account or reason of common things, or of his dayly comforts and enjoyments.

What's more common than for a man to wear garments? what then to find his garments warm upon him, or himself warm in his garments? and why a mans cloaths warm him we need not go to enquire of a great Philosopher, any man, any common man can give or assign a cause of it. Yet there is some-what in it beyond natural causes, which few take any notice of, and none can sufficiently or fully apprehend. Second causes produce their effects, the temperature of the air is a cause of warmth, and the garments we wear, warm us by exciting and drawing out the congenial warmth within us; yet *Elihu* puts on the question further than that, *Knowest thou how thy garments are warm,*

When he quieteth the earth with the South Wind?

Or as some translate, *When the earth is quiet by the South Wind.* Mr. Broughton reads, *when the land is still.* The original is only the South, *When he quieteth the earth, or when the earth is quiet by the South;* that is, when gentle windes or breezes blow from the Southern parts. The word rendered South or South wind, comes from a root signifying an high habitation, because the Sun is highest when 'tis in the South, that's its Meridian or high both elevation and habitation. And as when the Sun cometh into the South, 'tis in its highest elevation above us, so 'tis hottest in operation upon us.

So that, *by the South,* he meaneth the Spring and Summer time, when the Sun makes his Southern progress. And because usually our garments are warmest upon us, when the South wind bloweth,

Ccc c

Quam tranquilla est terra.

שקט
plerumque intransivè usurpat. Pisc. A meridie.

דרם
Meridies quasi habitatio altæ, quod Sol in ista plaga altiss incedat.

Quiescit ab austro dum non frigidatur ab austro procellos. Loc. there- vide eum.

therefore we render it *by the South wind*. The South wind sometimes bringeth stormes, as was shewed at the 9th verse, *Out of the South cometh the Whirlwind*; but mostly the South wind bringeth a calm and heat (Luke 12. 55.) *When ye see (saith Christ) the South wind blow, ye say, there will be heat, and it cometh to pass.* As the North wind usually blowes cold, so the South wind usually blowes hot, or bringeth heat. Here's a natural cause of warmth, *the quieting of the earth by the South wind.*

But is the earth at any time unquiet? If not, why is it said, *he quieteth the earth*? Here by the earth we are to understand that part of the Air which is nearest to the Earth. The Earth taken strictly is not unquiet, but the Air, in which we (who are upon the Earth) breath, the wind blowing, is unquiet and stormy, and when God commands down the storm and sends a calm he is said to quiet the Earth. So then, by the Earth, we are to understand the Air immediately compassing us, who dwell and move up on the Earth; and God *quieteth the earth with the South, or South wind*, when we on earth are quiet and quit from troublesome or tempestuous weather.

Terra est aer
propinqua ter-
re. Pisc.

Hence note;

The natural quietness of the Air which we have on Earth, is of God.

When there are no stormes nor blustering winds in the Air, God shews both his power and goodness, he then quieteth the Earth; we are to acknowledge God in it, and bless him for it, when the Earth is quiet. The disciples (Matth. 8. 26.) being in a great storm at Sea, and fearing the Vessel would be over-set, and that they should perish in the Waters, Christ said to the Sea, *Peace, be still*; and presently there was a great calm. He that quiets the Sea, quiets the Earth too. Christ hath calmes or peaceable winds, as well as stormes and stormy winds at his dispose.

And if the natural quietness of the Earth be the work of God, then much more is the civil quietness of it. God alone giveth quietness among men, he maketh them of one House, and them of one Nation to live quiet. When there are no winds, no tempestuous winds blowing in the skie, there may be stormes and tempests in the Spirits of men; and when there is a tempest within, only he *who forms the spirit of man within him* (Zech. 12. 1.)

can

can keep it from breaking out. There are civil ſtorms as well as natural, and the former are much more troubleſome and dangerous than the latter: God raiſeth thoſe ſtorms in judgment. *He ſent an evil Spirit between Abimelech and the men of Sichem* (Judg. 9. 23.) That is, he either gave Satan (the great matter of miſ-rule) leave to kindle jealousies & animofities between them, or he gave them up to their own evil, envious and malicious ſpirits, which hurried them on to their mutual vexation and deſtruction: now, as God raiſeth theſe ſtorms in judgment, ſo he either prevents or rebukes them in mercy. It is God who quiets both the ſpirits of Princes in governing, and the ſpirits of people in ſubmitting and obeying. He hath a South wind, ſome benigne and favourable wind, which he breathes upon the children of men, and then they are quiet, and then all's quiet: God being quiet towards, that is well-pleaſed with, and favourable unto man, he quiets all things. If the Lord do but ſay the word, what ſtorm, what tempeſt, what wrath, what rage, what outrage ſoever there is in the earth, all's huſht and ſtill. *Elihu* affirmed this ſtrongly when he put that challenging queſtion (Chap. 34. 29.) *When he giveth quietneſs, who then can make trouble; whether againſt a nation or a man only?* Natural quietneſs, much more civil, but above all, ſpiritual quietneſs is of the Lord.

*Tranquillus
Deus tranquil-
lat omnia.*

When there is the greateſt unquietneſs in the Air, and in the affaires of this world, when (as it is ſaid of thoſe times, 2 Chron. 15. 5.) *There is no peace to him that goeth out, nor to him that comes in, but great vexations are upon all the inhabitants of the coun-tryes,* men contending with and (like beaſts) tearing one another, yet even then there may be ſpiritual quietneſs in the ſoul of a believer; he may ſit ſtill and unmoveable, in the favour and love of God, though the earth be moved (yea removed) and the hills carried into the miſt of the Sea. *This is entirely the work of God; he can give quietneſs to the ſoul in the miſt of all worldly unquietneſs.* Chriſt ſaid to his diſciples, and in them to all believers (John 16. 33.) *Theſe things have I ſpoken to you that ye might have peace; in the world ye ſhall have tribulation.* The meaning of Chriſt is not to aſſure his diſciples, that they ſhall have peace in him after they have had tribulation in the world, but that their inward ſpiritual peace ſhall ſynchronize or be contemporary with their outward worldly tribulations. To have trouble

ble without, and peace within, at the same time, *This is the special gift of God.* The text tells us, *God quieteth the earth*; and as that gift of natural quietness is a mercy, so civil quietness is a great mercy, and spiritual quietness, quietness of heart and tranquillity of mind, especially in the midst of tribulations, is the greatest mercy of all. We should pray earnestly, that God would keep the earth quiet, or quiet the earth, when ever we find it unquiet, by some gracious South wind, but above all, that he would quiet our spirits by the sweet breathings of his blessed Spirit, that though at any time there should be nothing (which God forbid) but unquietness on the earth, yet we may have much quietness in our hearts.

Again consider, the former context told us of stormes and tempests, of thunder and lightening, of snow and rain, driving men from their labour in the field, to their homes and houses, and the wild beasts of the fields to their dens and coverts: Now this text speaks of warmth, of calmes, and quietness, *He quieteth the earth by the South wind.*

Hence observe;

There is a continual vicissitude in natural things.

As no day of the year is of the same continuance or length as to light, so very few are of the same complexion or temper as to heat and cold, fair or foul weather, stormes or calmes. Now if there be such a vicissitude in natural things, then do not wonder that there is a vicissitude in civil things, or in the affaires and conditions of men in this world. If after the faire weather of health and peace, the foul weather of sickness and trouble come upon us, if after calmes we meet with stormes, let us not be troubled. A heathen Poet said, We should not be diffident in a stormy day, that we shall never have quietness, nor should we be confident in a quiet day, that we shall never have a storm. *David*, a holy man, was once exceedingly out in both; in his adversity he said, I shall never be established; that was the sence of his saying, when in his haste he said, *all men are liars* (Psal. 116. 11.) In his prosperity he said, *I shall never be moved.* The Lords favour had made his mountain stand strong, and he began not only to think but conclude it would alwayes stand in the same strength, till his experience confuted that fancy, *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.*

*Nemo confidat
nimium secundis,
nemo desperet meliora lapsis:
Res Deorum
celeri ro-
tatur turbine
versat. Sen.
in Thyeste.*

bled (*Psal. 30. 6, 7.*) 'Tis good for us to be in expectation of, and preparation for all sorts of changes, seeing all things here below are changeable. That great Monarch said (*Dan. 4. 4.*) *I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace, yet presently he saw in a dream, that all his flourishing prosperity was but like a dream that passeth away; and while those boasts of an earthly greatness and settlement were in his mouth (vers. 30.) Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the Kingdom, &c. There fell a voice from Heaven (vers. 31.) saying, O King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken, the Kingdom is departed from thee.* All sublunary things, the surest and best settled estates, not only of the men of this world, or of worldly men, but of all men, even of good men, in this world, are as subject to changes, as the Moon is, or as the wind and weather.

Lastly, Whereas, when *Elihu* to the question, *Knowest thou how thy garments are warm,* puts this addition, *when he quieteth the earth with the South wind?* *Job* might say, that's an answer to the question. If you ask me, how my garments are warm? I answer, *By Gods quieting the earth with the South wind.* But here is something more intended; though this be a cause of warmth, yet not all the cause. It is possible for the weather to be warm, and our garments not warm. It was shewed before, that God is able to suspend the working or effects of nature: as, through his power a man may be in the fire and yet the fire not burn him (it was so with the Three Children in *Daniel*) so a man may be in the Sunshine, and his clothes not warm him. God can stay or stop the influences and effects of the Sun. The shining of the Sun and the quietness of the Air are true reasons of the warmth we feel in our garments, yet not all the reason. And therefore *Elihu* would convince *Job* by this question, that if he could not give the whole reason of Naturals, much less could he of providentials. And as he convinceth him of his insufficiency, and incompetency to deal and debate with God, by his ignorance about the warmth of his garments that covered him; So in the next verse, he convinceth him of weakness and inability, by calling him to consider the mighty power and self-sufficiency of God, who alone, without any of his or of any mans assistance, made and spread out the mighty garment, the Skie, which enwraps and covers all men and all things on earth. That's the general import of the following question.

Ver.

Vers. 18. *Hast thou with him spread out the Sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking-Glasse.*

וְרָקִיעַ

Ponitur pro
preterito; hoc
ex ipsa senten-
tia liquet. Deus
enim semet ex-
pandit celos
cum eos crea-
ret, non expan-
dit eos am-
plius. Pisc:

The word which we render, and is here used as a Verb, to spread, beareth an allusion to Metals, which are beaten out by an hammer into plates. The Nowne signifies the Firmament (*Gen. 1.*) because it is an *expansion*, or thing spread out. I find the Verb is applyed to the work of God upon the Earth (*Psal. 136. 6.*) where the Psalmist puts this among the praises of God, or the things for which God is to be praised, *To him who stretched out the earth.* The stretching or spreading out of the earth is the work of God, as well as the spreading out of the Heaven. The earth is a solid opacous and globous body, yet it is said to be stretch- ed out, because as there is a roundness in the Earth, so a mighty extent and vastness. *To him that stretched out the earth above the waters, to him give thanks.* But though the Earth be also stretch- ed out, yet more properly (of which *Elisha* here speaks) *the Sky. Hast thou with him spread out*

לְשָׁמַיִם

Cælum vel nu-
bes vel aerem
significat, unde
aliqui conjun-
dum de omnibus
accipiunt.

Sculpt:

Cæli sic dicti a
tenuitate sub-
stantie, et
valet articu-
lum accusativi
casus. Pisc:

Apud Hebræos
idem significant
Shamayim &
Schebbhaim;
ita apud Lati-
nos cælum &
Æther; inter-
dum aer media
regionis ubi
sunt nubes hoc
nomine signi-
ficatur. Merc:

The Sky?

The word rendred Sky, is put sometimes for the Air, sometimes for the Clouds, as also for the Heavens above both the Clouds and Air. Several of the learned expound it here of the Air, that is, of all below the Moon; others of the Heavens which are above. *Hast thou with him spread out the Sky, or the Heaven?*

This spreading forth of the Sky may have a three-fold refe-
rence.

First, To the eternal Council of God before time. As if he had said, *Wast thou with God when he decreed or purposed to spread out the Heavens?*

Secondly, To the work of God in the beginning of time. *Wast thou with God, when he did actually spread out the Sky or Firmament in the second dayes work of Creation? (Gen. 1. 6.)*

Thirdly, (which some insist much upon) to the daily or fre-
quently renewed work of God in ordering and altering the face
and motion of the Heavens. As if he had said, *Hast thou with him, when the Sky seeming to be wrapped up in darkness, and rent with thunder and storms; hast thou then with him scattered the dark-
ness, and cleared up the air, making all strong or whole again? Thus*
he

he is supposed speaking of a thing often done, even after every storme, not of spreading the Sky at first.

The Vulgar Latine renders it ironically, in the second sense; *Tu forsitan*
Thou perhaps didst joyn with him in making the Heavens! As if *cum illo fabri-*
Elihu had said, 'Tis like, or belike thou wast with him when he *catus: es calor.*
made the Heavens; Thou surely wast the Giant or Mighty man *Vulg:*
who assisted at the spreading out of that vast Canopie. Didst thou poor
worm, contribute thy help, or lend thy hand to God in the creation of
the World? are we beholding to thee that the Heavens which we
behold, compass in all things with their embraces? you speak of your
self at such a rate, as if you had been a partner or coadjutor with God
in the Creation, and had with him spread out the Heavens. Thus the
words are a strong Negation; Thou hadst nothing to do with God
when he spread out the Heavens in the work of Creation; why then
art thou so busie with God about the works of his Providence, and par-
ticularly about his dealing with thy self? The sum of Elihu's argu-
ment in this matter may be thus conceived; If God call not man
in other things as a Counsellor or Judge of his actions, nor can be re-
quired of any man to do so, nor may any man presume to speak against
his ordering the Heavens and Meteors, which yet concern the great
good or hurt of thousands; then it must needs be a very unequal
thing that any one man should expect of God a reason of his particu-
lar dealing with him, but patiently submit unto it, not at all question-
ing, either his justice or his goodness, how greatly and grievously soe-
ver he is afflicted.

First, Taking the Heavens, either strictly, or, as many do, synecdochically, a part being put for the whole work of Creation,

Note;

God made the world;

He spread the Heavens, and stretched out the Earth, Heaven and Earth are the work of his hands.

Secondly, *God had no partner in his work. Hast thou with him*
spread out the Sky? The Scripture is much in exalting the honour
of God, as the sole Agent and Efficient in setting up the frame of
the World, (*Isa 44. 24.*) *Thus saith the Lord, I am the Lord*
that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the Heavens alone,
that spreadeth abroad the Earth by my self. The Prophet brings
in God speaking thus, to comfort his ancient people when they
saw

saw none to help them. *What cannot God do alone, who stretcheth out the Heavens alone? Cannot he bring back the Church of the Jews out of Babylon alone, who stretcheth out the Heavens alone? cannot he raise up Cyrus for his Shepherd, and move him to make Proclamation for their return, when there was none to move him about it? He frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh Diviners mad.* Those lying Diviners said, the Jews were fast enough for coming out, but God frustrated their tokens, and made them mad at their disappointments. Now as this may exceedingly comfort and encourage the people of God all the world over in their greatest straits, that God made the world, and spread out the Sky alone, so it doth exceedingly advance the power and glory of God. If a man have but a great Carpet or Coverlet to untold, he must call in the help of two or three to spread it and hold it up, one man cannot do it alone: But God spread out the Heaven, that mighty Canopie of the Heavens alone. And his spreading of it was the making of it; The mighty God by one act gave the Sky both its being and its forme: And all this he did without either Counsellor or Coadjutor. No man ever did any very great thing in the world, but it was either by the help of other mens heads in contriving, or by the help of their hands in effecting. *To be a sole-Agent of Great things, is the sole-priviledge of the Great God.* And surely if the Lord God had no assistant in the great work of Creation, he needs no assistance in his greatest works of Providence. He who made the world without help, can do what he pleaseth in the world without help. *Our help* (saith the Psalmist 124. 8.) *is in the name of the Lord, who made Heaven and Earth*; but the Maker of Heaven and of Earth, fetcheth all his help from his own Name.

Elihu having magnified the power of God in spreading out the Sky, takes occasion to give us a description of the Sky, *Hast thou with him spread out the Sky*

Which is strong, and as a molten Looking-Glasse?

We have here two things considerable in the Sky; First, the strength of it; Secondly, the clearness of it. But is the Sky strong? that may be thought an improper and incongruous Epithete: The Sky seemeth to be a weak thing, and the Air will scarce bear a feather; yet saith he, *Hast thou with him spread out the Sky which*
is

is strong? How are the Heavens or Sky strong? Philosophers and Interpreters upon this place, have largely diſconiſed the matter of the Heavens, which to our ſence are a very thin ſubſtance, and therefore ſeem to have little ſtrength in them.

I answer, Though to ſenſe and view the Sky or Heavens ſeem to have little ſtrength in them, yet indeed their ſtrength is beyond that of Rocks and Mountains. The learned Languages, both Greek and Latine, expreſſe the Sky by words which properly ſignifie ſtrength and firmneſs; and we following the Latine word commonly call it in our Engliſh tongue, *The Firmament*, as much as to ſay, a *firm thing*. When the Apoſtle would ſet forth the ſteadineſs (or as we tranſlate) the ſtedfaſtneſs of the faith of the *Coloſſians*, he makes uſe of this word (*ſepmura Chap. 2. 5.*) As if he had ſaid, I rejoyce to behold *the firmament of your faith*, or that your faith is as firme as the Firmament. Surely then the Sky or Firmament is very ſtrong, elſe the ſtrength of faith (which being ſtrong, is the ſtrongest thing, both actively and paſſively, in the world) had never been expreſſed by it. The Heavens are ſaid to be ſtrong (as faith is) becauſe of their laſtingneſs and duration. The Angels are pure Spirits, they are purer and of a more ſpiritual ſubſtance than the Sky or Heavens, yet they are ſtrong, ſo ſtrong and powerfull, that they are called *Powers*; their ſtrength is not a corporal ſtrength of fleſh and bone, as ours, and that of beaſts is, nor is it a ſtrength by compactneſs of earthy parts, as that of Stones and Metals is, but 'tis a ſtrength of laſtingneſs and activity ariſing from their ſpiritualneſs. Thus the Sky, eſpecially taking it for the Heavens above the air, is pure, there is a ſpiritualneſs in its nature, and ſo a ſtrength of laſtingneſs in it, beyond that of any earthly or elementary body. The Heavens are not made up of contrary qualities, as elementary bodies are: In them heat and coldneſs, moiſture and drineſs, are mingled together, and theſe contending with each other, at laſt ſubdue each other; whence all elementary bodies become weak and corruptible. The Heavens have ſome cognation with elementary bodies, yet without the contrariety of active qualities. Heaven is like the Element of the Earth, in regard of firmneſs and ſolidity; it is like the water, in regard of its moveableneſs; it is like the air, in regard of its pellucidneſs or clearneſs; it is like the fire, with reſpect to its activenenſs. Heaven ſhines, yet 'tis without heat; 'tis ſolid, yet

D d d d

with-

*Firmitas tribu-
itur cælo prop-
ter immutabi-
litem, unde
Septuaginta
dicunt ſepm-
ura Latini Fir-
amentum.*

*PM fufila
PM fundere
liqui facere,
non a PM
conſtare.
Merc:*

without dryness; 'tis compact, yet without moistness; 'tis diaphanous and pellucid, yet without pores, or those small and unsensible holes, whereby sweat and vapours pass out of the body. So then the Scripture calls Heaven strong or firme, not as grosse bodies are called firme and strong, but because of its perpetual consistency and (as to nature) indissolubility; which doth the more highly advance and commend the power of God, who hath given it a strength and firmness, beyond that of Rocks and Adamants: For how fluid and moveable soever the Heavens are to view, yet they are the most strong and durable part of the whole Creation. *Hast thou with him spread out the Sky which is strong,*

And as a molten Looking-Glasse.

Postea veteres
Χαλκον ὀρα-
τον appellau-
runt.

חלף עץ vi-
deres inde visus
Et speculum.
Rab: Kimhi
in lib: radi:

Some read these words as an entire sentence, *Which is strong as a molten Looking-Glasse.* So Mr Broughton, *Couldst thou make a Firmament with him of the Air, settled as Glasse molten?* We put it distinctly in two parts, *which is strong, and as a molten Looking-Glasse.* Some of the old Poets used a like Epithete concerning Heaven, they called it, *The Brazen Heaven.* What the Lord threatens as a judicial affliction (Deut. 28. 23.) *The Heaven that is over thine head shall be Brasse,* that Heaven resembles in its natural constitution, 'tis like Brasse, or like a molten Looking-Glasse, by reason of its shining brightness. That which we commonly call Glasse, or a Looking-Glass is molten: of which we read (Exod. 38. 8.) *Moses made the Brazen Laver of the Looking-Glasses of the Women.* The godly women among the Jewes made a better use of their Looking-Glasses, than to dress themselves by, they offered them to the service of God in the Tabernacle.

One of the Jewish Doctors warns us to consider that the word which we render a *Looking-Glasse*, may be taken for a *look*, or for the *appearance of a thing*: As if he had said, *The Heavens are not only strong, but cleare, looking like, or being, to look on, like a thing that is molten.* Glasse is a diaphanous splendid body, we may see through it, or see the representation of objects in it. Thus the Heavens are strong as Steele, and cleare as a *molten Looking-Glasse*.

Hence observe;

First, *The Heavens are durable, they are strong.*

Secondly,

Secondly, *The Heavens are transparent, they are as a Looking Glasse.*

From this latter we may infer,

There is much to be seen in the Heavens;

They are a Looking-Glasse which represent many things to us. It hath been said, The whole world is a Looking Glasse, every Age we live in is a Looking-Glasse, in which many, both things *Serulum seculum.* and persons, are discovered: I may say much more, the Heavens are a Looking Glasse, wherein we may behold much of God, and much of our selves. And because the Heavens are called a Looking-Glasse, it should mind us to look upon the Heavens; they may mind us,

First, What God is, who hath made the Heavens (*Psal. 19. 1.*) *The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his handy work. We may see God by the Heavens;*

First, In his nature, that he is pure and holy. He that hath made such a pure thing as the Heaven is, how pure is he! There is no dirt in the Sky, no filth in the Heavens, no uncleanness there; the dust or filth of this world can get but a little into the air, it cannot reach the Heavens. The purity of God is such as may shame the purity of the Heavens, and make them blush; though the Heavens are the purest part of the world, yet comparatively to God they are impure. This *Eliphaz* asserts expressly (*Chap. 15. 15.*) *Behold, he putteth no trust in his Saints, yea, the Heavens are not clean in his sight.* *Bildad* puts it yet further (*Chap. 26. 5.*) *Yea, the Starrs (which are the most pure and resplendent part of the Heavens) are not pure in his sight.*

Secondly, The Heavens are a Glasse, wherein we may behold the power of God. How unconceivable is his power, who hath made such a Canopie, and spread it over the heads of all Creatures! And if the visible Heavens are so glorious, what is the Heaven of Heavens! The Heaven which we see, is but the pavement of that which is unseen. God hath made such a Ceiling for this House below, as never needed mending, or repaire, he hath set such a Roof upon it as abides all weathers.

Thirdly, We may see in this Glas the wisdom of God, his wonderfull wisdom in contriving and fitting such a beautifull

D d d d 2

Roof

roof for this great House, the World. We admire the skill and wisdom of Architects in some peices of their work. O the wisdom of God in this!

Fourthly, We may see in the Heavens the unchangeableness of God. If he hath made the Heavens of such a lasting nature, that they have continued many thousand years without alteration; surely then he himself hath continued and will continue for ever without change, as he is at this day. The unchangeableness of God infinitely exceeds that of the Heavens. We find the Spirit of God by holy David infinitely preferring the God of Heaven, before the Heavens of God, in his unchangeableness (*Psal. 102. 26, 27.*) *Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the Earth, and the Heavens are the work of thy hands; they shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same.* The Heavens have but a shadow of unchangeableness, compared with God, *With whom is no variableness nor shadow of changing.*

Fifthly, In this Glass of the Heavens we may look upon or contemplate the wonderfull goodness of God to the sons of men, (*Psal. 8. 3.*) *When I consider the Heavens, the work of thy fingers, the Moon, and the Starrs, which thou hast ordained: What is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?* When-ever we behold the Heavens, it should mind us of the mercy and goodness of God to man two wayes. First, in making the Heavens for his use, while he dwels on the Earth. Secondly, that he hath prepared and provided him such a dwelling house, when he shall leave this Earth (*2 Cor. 5. 1.*) *We know that when the earthly house of this Tabernacle shall be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.*

Again, *The Heavens are a Looking-Glass, wherein we may behold our selves.*

First, *We may behold our weakness and impurity, and so our unlikeness to the Heavens, much more to the God of Heaven. When opposites are set one by or over against the other, they illustrate each other. In the spotless Heavens, we may see our spots; The pure Heavens may shew us our impurity.*

Secondly, *As in the Heavens we may see what we are, so what we*

we should be. The purity of the Heavens tells us we should be pure, they tell us we should be heavenly-minded, that is, let our minds chiefly upon heavenly things; yea, that our minds should be like the Heavens, pure and spotless. It is said of the Church (*Cant. 6. 10.*) *Who is this that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun?* Such, in a qualified sense, are all the parts and true members of the Church. Shall a man say, he hopes for an inheritance in the Heavens, when his mind is earthly, or when he minds only earthly things? Worldly men are not only earthly-minded, but their minds are earth, and themselves are called earth (*Jer. 22. 29.* and *Rev. 12. 16.*) Surely then they are earthly. On the other hand, godly men should not only mind heavenly things, but be a Heaven before they come to Heaven. The Church on Earth is called Heaven (*Heb. 12. 26.*) *Yet once more I shake not the Earth only, but also Heaven;* that is, the Church state. St John saith (*Rev. 12. 7.*) *There was war in Heaven:* But is there war in Heaven? is it not all peace and joy there? How then saith that Scripture, *There was war in Heaven?* By Heaven there he means the Church on earth, which is called Heaven; First, because there is not a more lively representation or resemblance of the highest Heavens (which is the habitation of Gods holiness, and of his glory) than the Church here below, which is a company of Saints and faithfull ones. Secondly, because the Church, while on Earth, hath more to do in Heaven, and for Heaven, then in or for the Earth; and that in three respects.

First, Her birth is from Heaven, being born of God.

Secondly, Her traffick is in and for Heaven. The Apostle saith of himself, and of all such as are truly the Church of God (*Phil. 3. 20.*) *Our conversation is in Heaven;* our trade is in Heaven. Though we have business on Earth, yet that which is our business indeed is in Heaven. The Church hath more to do in Heaven than on Earth; her paines and labours, her cares and endeavours are more for heavenly than for earthly things. They that bestow most of their labour upon earthly things, are earthly. In all things we ought to be heavenly, and in every thing we do, we ought to be doing for Heaven.

Thirdly, Because her Head and her Inheritance is in Heaven.

Here

Here she is a stranger, there is her home; nor is she ever truly at home, till she comes thither.

Thus as Heaven is a Glasse, wherein we may see what we ought to be now; we should labour to be pure, constant, and of an unvariable temper, as the Heavens are; so what we shall be, and shall have hereafter: 'Tis such a Glasse as God hath made for us to behold our selves in, and above all to behold himself, his blessed self in. Let us dresse our selves by this Glasse every day.

Let it not satisfie us to look upon the Heavens, that we may see and be taken with their own beauty and excellency, as Philosophers do in their discourses of Heaven; but let us see God in them, let us see Grace and Glory in them. There is so little of God in the discourses of Philosophers (saith one) that they are colder than the Frost and Snow, of which they often discourse. But let us see God in this Looking-Glasse of the Heavens, and therein also let us see our selves, and learn to be fitting and preparing our selves for heavenly joyes and enjoyments. We have never looked well upon or in this Glasse, till we have mended our dresse, and are become better and more beautifull by looking in it.

J O B, Chap. 37. Vers. 19, 20.

19. *Teach us what we shall say unto him, for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness.*

20. *Shall it be told him that I speak? if a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up.*

Elihu having (in the former part of the Chapter) rehearsed many of the wonderful works of God in natural things, beyond his reach, bids Job reach them if he could, or, he invites Job, if he could, to give him some direction, what account to give unto God about them, professing that he himself knew not, could not tell what to say; telling him also, that he was much assured no man else could; *If a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up.*

As if Elihu had said, *Now thou hast heard the works of God thus at large discoursed, I appeal to thee, if any man know how to dispute or fault his doings; as for our parts, we cannot tell what to alledge or reply against them, because we cannot see the depth of his wisdom, nor reach the bottom of his administrations.* And so the whole context may contain an argument from the less to the greater. If we are ignorant of, or can hardly apprehend these natural things, how much more must we be ignorant of, and unable to search into the secrets and reserved cases of divine Providence? *We know little of our selves, how much less of God!* That's the generall scope and intendment of these two verses.

Vers. 19. *Teach us what we shall say, for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness.*

There is a twofold interpretation of the former part of this 19th verse; some expounding it as a serious motion, or a motion in good earnest made by Elihu in his own name, or in the name of those about him, that Job would give them counsel in that matter, *Teach us, shew us what we shall say unto him;* as for our parts, we are compassed about with so much darkness, that we know not what to say further, or more than we have already, about these matters; from whence he would infer or intimate, that much less did he or they about him, know what to say more of Job's matters,

or of the dealings of God with him. Thus, according to this interpretation, *Elihu* seemeth to prosecute what he spake formerly; *I desire to justify thee*, I would gladly undertake the patronage of thy cause, or find out a way how to acquit thee of all those rash speeches, and impatient complaints, that proceeded from thee; but as yet, for my part, I see not how to do it, and therefore, if thou dost, pray shew me.

*Irrisorie subdit
dicens, ostende
nobis, &c.
Aquino.*

Secondly, And that more generally, these words are expounded, as if in them *Elihu* had put a kind of slight or scorn upon *Job*, triumphing and insulting over him, as his inferiour in disputation. As if he had said, *Go to now, O Job*, seeing thou thinkest thyself so wise and just, that thou art able to plead and debate thy cause with God himself; teach us, who are nothing to thee, and who ingeniously confess our selves ignorant, how to resolve those questions lately proposed to thy consideration: We are overwhelmed with deep darkness, and have no hope to dispel it, or get out of it, unless thou canst give us light. Thus, I say, the words are generally expounded, as spoken with a kind of stomach; or carrying in them the sense of a secret subannation; as if *Job* were more able to see than they all that were about him, as if they were dull and blind, and he alone had the wit. Now you that are so great a Master, and so ready a Teacher, come shew us, play the Master, and act the Tutors part, teach us what we shall say to him.

Age magistrum

But I rather adhere to the former exposition, taking the words as a plain motion, though not altogether without a mixture of reproof. *Teach us what we shall say*; If thou wouldest have us say anything in thy cause, give us instruction. An Advocate, when his Clyant comes for counsel; tells him, if you would have me plead your cause give me instructions, open your case to me, that I may plead it for you; thus here, *teach us, shew us what we shall say*, give us directions if thou art able. *Job* had said (Chap. 23. 4.) *He would order his cause before God, and fill his mouth with arguments*; pray, saith *Elihu*, give us some of those arguments now; as for me, and those that are with me, we are utterly unprovided what arguments to use, how to argue, how to plead any thing for the justification of thy speeches and behaviour in thy affliction; *Therefore teach us what we shall say unto him.*

The text is, *make us to know*. Teaching makes men knowing; he that teacheth another endeavours to convey knowledge into him;

him; and therefore the same word may very well signifie, *to teach and make to know*, forasmuch as the tendency of teaching is for the beginning or for the encreasing of knowledge. *Teach us*

What we shall say unto him;

That is, *to the Almighty*. God is the Antecedent to this Relative *he*; what shall we say to God in thy defence? we would do our best, our utmost, if we knew how. There are two sorts of persons who call for teaching.

First, Usually they desire others to teach them, who are convinced or sensible of their own ignorance, and would be delivered from or brought out of it. Thus David prayed that God would teach him, that he would *teach him his Statutes* (Psal. 119. 33, 66.) The sick man in the 34th Chapter of this Book is represented humbly craving this favour (vers. 32.) *That which I see, not teach thou me.* Here's the true genius and desire of a learner, he would be taught, he is convinced that he wants knowledge very much or is very ignorant, and therefore he would be taught. But,

Secondly, Some call upon others to teach them, meerly to convince them of their ignorance and inability to teach them, or to shew that it is a great presumption in them to pretend to the knowledge of such things as they call upon them to teach. In this latter sense we are to understand this desire or motion of *Elihu*, saying to *Job*, *Teach us what we shall say unto him*, that is, what defence we shall make for thee, or what for our selves, if we were in thy case, or had such a mind to plead with God, as thou hast expressed more than once. *Elihu* moves *Job* to teach them, knowing that he was not able to teach them, or to let him know that he had not knowledge enough to teach them in that matter. *Teach us what we shall say unto him,*

For we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness.

A facie tenebrarum. Heb.

In this latter part of the verse *Elihu* gives *Job* a reason why he and his fellows would (though they knew he could not teach them) be taught by him. As if he had said, we plainly and clearly acknowledge *that we are in the dark* about these matters, and

Eccc

Cannot

Cannot order our speech by reason of darkness.

The word here rendred to order, may have a double allusion;
First, To a Military;

Secondly, To a Judiciary ordering.

It is an allusion to the Military ordering of an Army or Camp, because words in speech ought to be put into good order, to be duly ranked and drawn out as souldiers to battel.

They also that have to do in Causes and Courts of Justice ought to order their words aright, they must not speak at random, or what comes next, but they must weigh the plea they make, and put every thing in its due place. Thus saith *Elihu* here, *We cannot order our speech*, we cannot tell how to draw up our reasons, we are over-matched in this business, we know not how to plead before God in thy case, nor what defence to make for thee; thou pretendest to be able to contend with him, but we are not, *we cannot order our speech*. Why not?

By reason of darkness.

It is darkness that usually hinders the putting of things in order: Darkness in the Air doth so, much more darkness of the Understanding. There must be light of one kind or other for the ordering of every matter. Where darkness is there must needs be confusion: and therefore *Elihu* gives a very good account, why they could not order their speech, when he saith, *We cannot do it by reason of darkness*. What darkness? there is a twofold darkness,

First, There is darkness proper, or natural. Once there was darkness, because light was not come or created; of that *Moses* speaks (*Gen. 1. 3, 4.*) *Darkness was upon the face of the deep*. Now there is darkness every night, caused by the departure of light, or the going down of the Sun; as also sometimes by the Eclipse of the Sun (*Matth. 27. 45.*) *There was darkness over all the land*, when Christ was crucified. It was not this kind of darkness, that hindered *Elihu* from ordering his speech; for a man may order his speech though he have neither Sun-light nor Candle-light; a man needs no other light, but that of Reason and Understanding to order his speech by.

Secondly, Darkness in Scripture is taken improperly and metaphorically; and so we are to understand it here, *We cannot order*

our

our ſpeech by reaſon of darkneſs. And this darkneſs, which I call improper or metaphorical, is of ſeveral kinds.

Fiſt, Trouble and ſorrow in Scripture language are called darkneſs (*Pſal. 18. 28.*) *Then, O Lord, wilt lighten my darkneſs,* that is, thou wilt bring me out of a ſorrowful, into a joyful ſtate. (*Joel. 2. 2.*) *It is a day of darkneſs;* what is that? *a day of trouble and affliction.* Hence the ſtate of the damned in Hell is called darkneſs, yea, utter darkneſs (*Math. 22. 13.*) becauſe it is a ſtate of ſorrow, even of everlaſting ſorrows. This darkneſs of ſorrow and trouble will hinder a man very much from ordering his ſpeech. He that is compaſſed about with, eſpecially if diſcompoſed by ſorrow, is unfit to ſpeak before men of underſtanding; yet, I conceive, this was not the darkneſs here meant.

Secondly, Darkneſs in Scripture notes the ſtate of a natural man, as unregenerate and without faith. *Ye were ſometimes darkneſs,* ſaith the Apoſtle (*Eph. 5. 8.*) that is, ye were ſometimes unconverted, or in a ſtate of nature, which is called darkneſs, not only there, but often elſewhere (*1 Theſſ. 5. 4.*) *Brethren, ye are not in darkneſs,* that is, ye are not in a ſinful condition, grace hath ſhined unto you, yea, it hath ſhined into you, or as the Apoſtle ſpeaks (*2 Cor. 4. 6.*) *it hath ſhined in your hearts, to give you the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt;* he it was who came on purpoſe into the world, as to give life to them that were dead, ſo *to give light to them that ſit in darkneſs* (*Luk. 79.*) 'Tis a truth alſo that this kind of darkneſs doth exceedingly hinder a man in ſpeaking, eſpecially when ſome things are to be ſpoken. He that is in the darkneſs of a natural condition, will be to ſeek (as we ſay) or knoweth not how to order his ſpeech before God, in any ſpiritual matter. Yet, neither is this here meant; for *Elihu* was not a man in this kind of darkneſs, he was doubtleſs a godly man, a man that had much acquaintance with, and in the things of God: Therefore it was not becauſe of this darkneſs that he could not order his ſpeech before God.

Thirdly, Darkneſs is put for the deſerted eſtate of a godly man (*Iſaiah. 50. 10.*) *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his ſervant* (he that doth ſo is ſurely a godly man, or in the ſtate of grace; who is there of this ſort among you) *that walketh in darkneſs, and hath no light,* God having with-drawn the light of his countenance from him? Now 'tis a very great truth

(and sadly experienced by some) that this kind of darkness doth exceedingly hinder a man *from ordering his speech before God*. A poor soul, that is walking in the darkness of a spiritual, troubled, deserted state, that is bewildred with fear and doubt about the favour of God to him, and his acceptance with him, knoweth not what to do or say before God, he knoweth not how to order his speech in prayer or discourse. This darkness hindereth us mightily in ordering our speech before God. Yet I conclude, that neither is this the darkness here understood, which is a darkness following upon the present going down or setting of the *Sun of Righteousness* upon the soul, who was himself once thus grievously benighted, when nayled to the Cross, he cryed out, *my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.*

Fourthly, Darkness is taken for that remaining ignorance or imperfection of knowledge which abides even in the best, in the holiest of men after their conversion, while on this side Heaven. This ignorance is darkness (1 Cor. 13. 9.) and this is that darkness which *Elihu* here intends, when he saith, *we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness*. As if he had said, Though I, and they with me, are not altogether rude nor ignorant of God and his wayes; though we have received (through grace) a competency of divine light, to guide us through this world, yet we are sensible of so much dimness and darkness, that we cannot *order our speech before God*, nor direct our selves what to say for thee, as thou hast handled the matter.

Further, The darkness that (as *Elihu* saith) hindereth man in ordering his speech before God, may be taken, not only for the darkness of the man, or of the person speaking, as hath been shewed already, but also for the darkness of the matter, or of the things about which he is called or occasioned to speak. As there is a darkness of the Subject, so a darkness of the object, which *David* thus expresseth (Psal. 49. 4.) *I will utter dark sayings upon the harp*: And again (Psal. 78. 2.) *I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old*. A parable is a dark saying, that is, a mysterious saying, a sentence not obvious to every understanding; there is a secret in parables (Prov. 1. 5, 6.) *A man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels, to understand a proverb (or parable) and the interpretation, the words of the wise and their dark sayings*. When *Elihu* saith, *We cannot order our speech by*
reason.

reason of darkness, we may take it in this latter sense, as well as in the former; for as there is, and will be, some mixture of darkness with light in our minds, till we come to that inheritance of the Saints in light (Col. 1. 12.) so there may be a darkness in the matter to be spoken of. Some truths are so mysterious, secret and hidden, they are so obscure, or lye so deep, that they are, by us, even unsearchable and unperceivable; and then we cannot order our speech about them by reason of their darkness, though possibly our selves may have attained some good measure of light. And as there are many things in the doctrine of Faith very dark to us, so also in those dealings of God with us, which reach our sense; we see and feel that which we know not how to give a reason or an account of. The light of the Sun is clear and shines into our eyes, yet there is a difficulty to understand the nature of Light. We are in the dark, even about Light it self; how much more are we in the dark about the hidden and dark works of God, in many of his dispensations towards the children of men! And surely then, we cannot order our speech (concerning them) by reason of darkness.

Hence note;

First (taking darkness in the improper sence) *Ignorance is darkness.*

If that ignorance which remaineth after conversion be darkness, then surely much more is that which dwelleth in a natural man unconverted. Knowledge is the light of the mind: The understanding, if furnished with knowledge, is as the Sun in the Firmament; but a man who hath no knowledge nor understanding, is like the Air without the Sun, nothing but darkness; and so much ignorance as abideth in any man, so much darkness abideth in him. The natural man is altogether ignorant, as to the understanding of spiritual things spiritually, that is, savingly, and therefore he (as to them) is altogether darkness, he is (as Job spake in another case of a land, Chap. 10. 22.) *a man of darkness, as darkness it self, and in him the light is as darkness*; he cannot see by reason of darkness, nor can he speak, to purpose, of the things of God, though he may speak very wisely about the things of the world, by reason of darkness, or because his very Reason (which is the natural light of man) is darkened.

There are six things, which a natural man, by reason of this darkness, cannot see to order, neither his speech nor his person about.

First,

First, He cannot see what he should be, and what he is commanded to be, holy, just and righteous.

Secondly, He cannot see what he should do, or is commanded to do, just and righteous things.

Thirdly, By reason of this darkness he cannot see, what he ought not to do, or is commanded not to do, unjust, evil and unrighteous things. He hath not a discerning about either the affirmative or the negative part of divine commandments; and hence it comes to pass, that as he doth not what he ought, so he doth what he ought not.

Fourthly, By reason of this darkness, it must needs be, that he cannot see what he hath done against the commandment, his sins of commission, nor what he hath neglected to do according to the commandment, his sins of Omission.

Fifthly, If so, he cannot see what he ought to repent of, and turn from. Some repent not of that which they see to be evil, but no man can repent of that, in particular, which he seeth not to be evil. I grant every godly man makes it his dayly work, to repent of his unknown sins, as well as of those which he knows (*Psal. 19. 12.*) *Who can understand his errors?* that is, all the errors, wanderings and mistakes of his life; and therefore *David* prayed in the close of the verse, *cleanse thou me from secrets faults*, that is, from those faults and failings which are secrets to me, or which I know not of. But though a man may truly repent of his unknown sins, yet no man repents of sin, who doth not know sin.

Sixthly, By reason of darkness a man doth not see, nor knowes he the things that he hopes for; he possibly hath great hopes of heaven, or of eternal life, yet knowes not in any measure what they are indeed, nor how to order his speech about either, because he is in darkness. So then, the state of an unregenerate person is darkness, and therefore he cannot see at all, and much darkness may remain in a person regenerate, and therefore he cannot see all (*1 John 1. 5.*) *God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all*; but though the people of God have light and are light, yet in them there is darkness. And because wheresoever ignorance is, there is darkness, according to the degree of that ignorance, we may take these Inferences from it.

First, *To be in an ignorant condition is to be in a very uncertain condition*, for such are in darkness. Now, as Christ speaketh (*John 12. 35.*)

12. 35.) *He that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.* In what an uncertain condition is that man who is dayly going, yet knows not whether he goeth? whether he be going right or wrong, whether he be going for his good or for his hurt, whether he be going homeward or from home, whether he be going to a pällace or a prison, whether to life or death, to heaven or hell. Thus 'tis with a man in darkness, and proportionable to the darkness that is in any man, is the uncertainty of that mans condition; and therefore till a man be got out of this darkness of ignorance, he is in a very uncertain condition, he knoweth not whither he is going, though he be certainly going downward, and that to destruction.

Secondly, If ignorance be darkness, in what degree soever it is, then, *ignorance is very dangerous.* Darkness subjects us to danger. As a man is in an uncertain condition while he is in darkness, so in a dangerous condition. *If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch.* O how dangerous is the state of that man who is altogether in darkness! We find these two put together (*Isa. 9. 2.* repeated *Matth. 4. 16.*) *To them that sate in darkness, and in the valley of the shadow of death, is light risen up.* How near are they to danger, who are even in the valley of the shadow of death? Thus 'tis with those that are in a state of darkness; and so far as darkness is in any man, he is in danger to be misled, and to erre both in opinion and practise. Woe to those who, when light is come into the world shall be found loving darkness rather than light (*Joh. 3. 19.*) these are in the greatest danger, the danger of condemnation, yea, this is *the condemnation.*

Thirdly, To be in an ignorant condition, is to be in a *very uncomfortable condition*; darkness is uncomfortable. And though such as are in spiritual darkness are not sensible of their danger (and therefore take up their comforts, rejoyce in the creature, and sing care away) yet their danger is not the less, but more; and when once a man is made sensible of his darkness, he is compassed about with many feares, doubts and sorrows, &c. The darkness of the night is very uncomfortable, in comparison of the light of the day; what then is the darkness of sin and ignorance, in comparison of the light of grace and of the knowledge of God! And therefore we should,

First, Pity the ignorant, those especially who are totally ignorant

rant and alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, as the Apostle describes them (*Eph. 4. 18.*) We pity those that are bodily blind, because (as we say) they are dark, they cannot see the Sun; surely, if bodily darkness, or the darkness of the bodily eye, be to be pittied, if such are to be prayed for that they may receive sight, how much more is the darkness of the soul to be pittied, and the blindness of the mind! and therefore are others to pity them the more, because they (not seeing their danger, nor their misery by it) do not at all pity themselves.

Secondly, If ignorance be darkness, and that an uncertain, a dangerous and an uncomfortable condition, then we should use and improve all the means we can, or, within our compass, for the curing of our own souls and others of this evil; how should they that are in a state of ignorance desire knowledge! The great end of sending the ministry of the Gospel to any people, is to open their eyes, and turn them from this darkness to light (*Acts 26.*

18.) Christ saith to the Church of *Laodicea*, in that case (*Rev. 3. 18.*) *I counsel thee to anoint thy eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see*; that is, use those means that are proper for the gaining of true knowledge in the things of God. Thou pretendest to have knowledge, but thy darkness is more than thy light, and thy ignorance more than thy knowledge; therefore I counsel thee to buy of me eye-salve, that thou mayest see.

Secondly, Forasmuch as *Elihu* saith, *We cannot order our speech by reason of darkness*; we, though knowing men, know not what to say.

Note;

There is much darkness remaining in those that have most light in this world.

They that know much and have the clearest sight, are yet dark in many things; what they see is but little to what they see not (*1 Cor. 13. 9.*) *We know but in part*, and (*vers. 12.*) *We see through a glass darkly*. The sight that we have of things, though in a Gospel-way, is but a kind of dark sight, *we see through a glass darkly*. *Elihu* saw himself compassed about with much darkness; and who may not find darkness yet abiding in him? What-ever our light or knowledge is, all that we know is not half so much as that which we know not; this should humble us. We are very apt to be

be proud of that knowledge we have (*Knowledge puffs up*) but did we remember how much ignorance is mixed and amalled with our knowledge, how much darkneſs with our light, we ſhould ſee little reaſon to be proud of it, or puff up with it.

Take theſe Inferences of duty from this ſecond Note.

First, *We ſhould alwayes be praying for Light.* Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights: If we would have light from the Father of lights we muſt ask it.

Secondly, *Let the moſt ſeeing take heed of preſuming that they ſee all.* Some think they know enough, yea, that they have all knowledge, what is it that they know not? But *Elihu* and his friends ſaid well, *We cannot order our ſpeech by reaſon of darkneſs.* Do not ſay you know all, how much ſoever you know. It is an old rule and a true one, whether you take it with reſpect to actions or propoſitions, *The wiſeſt man ſeeeth not all.* And one of the Ancients hath rightly taught us, *That the beſt and higheſt point of our knowledge, is to confeſs our ignorance in the things of God.*

Bernardus
non vidit omnia.
In his quæ dicuntur de Deo maxima ſcientia eſt ignorantiam fateri.
Cyril. Cat. 6.

Thirdly, If the darkneſs of ignorance be not quire diſpelled from the moſt enlightened and knowing ſouls, Then, *As they who have received moſt light of knowledge, have cauſe enough to be humbled in themſelves, ſo to beware of deſpiſing others.*

Thirdly, When *Elihu* ſaith, *We cannot order our ſpeech by reaſon of darkneſs,*

Obſerve;

Ignorance is a very great hinderance in our approaches and addreſſes to God.

As God himſelf is light, ſo they who come to God, need much light: They need light,

First, About their own condition.

Secondly, About the diſpenſations of God under which they are.

Thirdly, About the nature and tenour of the Covenant.

Fourthly, About the nature and divine properties of God, with whom they have to do.

Fifthly, About the excellency, faithfulneſs and all-ſufficiency of Chriſt, who hath done all for them.

Sixthly, About the freeneſs of the grace of God towards them.

F f f f

Seventh-

Seventhly, About the power and working of grace in them, especially of that grace of Faith.

If we want the grace of Faith, we know not how to order our speech before God; nor can we come to God without faith (*Heb. 11. 6.*) & if we want the knowledge of these things, we must needs want faith in them, or rather in God concerning them. A dark soul is a confused soul; how then is it possible that he should order his speech before God, who is himself confused & out of order? Persons must be well composed, before their actions, speeches or addresses can. Therefore if you would have free access to God, and order your speech before him aright, labour for a clear light, or as the Apostle speaks (*Col. 2. 3.*) for the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; that is (as I conceive) of God the Father, in and through his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. That's the great mystery, and glory of Christians; they have the most excellent subject in the world to study upon, and grow up in the knowledge of. Other Sciences consider and contemplate the Creature, and the things of this Life; but Christianity winds up the soul to the meditation of the Creator in the Mediator, whom to know is Eternal Life.

Fourthly, As darkness is considered in the Object,

Note;

The things of God are so mysterious, that we know not how to speak of them as we ought: Or, There is a darkness in the Word, Wayes and Works of God, which we cannot overcome.

The best have not light enough to look through all the darkness and obscurity that is in the Works and Word of God. I do not affirm this, to cast that reproach of obscurity upon the Word of God, which the *Papists* do: The Word of God hath in it abundance of light, yea, 'tis a light; there is enough in it so plain, that any who have any true light, may see much of it, and be able to order their speech, comfortably and competently, that is, acceptably, before God about it. Yet there is a mysterious darkness in many parts of the Word and Works of God, which our light is not clear enough to master and get through. God hath purposely done and spoken some things, which stand as secrets, which our eye

eye cannot pierce into, that he might keep us low and little in our own eyes. As there is enough in the Word, which the simplest may understand and speak of to salvation, so there are some things there to pose the wisest, and hold them in a silent admiration. The Apostle Peter (2 Epist. 3. 16.) speaking about the Epistles of Paul, saith, *In them there are some things hard to be understood*: He doth not say, all things in the Epistles of Paul are hard to be understood, but some things are, and they are so for our exercise and tryal. As those things are altogether secrets to us, which God hath not revealed, so some things are in a great degree secrets to us, though God hath revealed them; and if so,

Then, First, Let us *believe when we cannot understand*. Faith hath a knowledge about all general Principles; yet he that hath no more Faith in some special Scripture-Principles and Mysteries than he hath knowledge, will have but little Faith in them. Though we must have a knowledge about every thing we believe, yet we may be much more in believing many things, than we are in knowing them; we may have much Faith in that, of which we have but little knowledge. As Faith is the evidence of those things which cannot be seen at all by the eye of sense, so it is the evidence of some things to us, which are very little seen by the eye of the understanding. The blessed Virgin said, *How shall this be?* When she was told she should have a Son, she could not understand the thing, there was a darkness in it, yet she believed it.

Secondly, When we find darkness in the Works or Truths of God, which are the Object of our Faith, Let us adore what we cannot see, and admire where we cannot apprehend.

Thirdly, When we find darkness in any of the works of God, Let us be sure to forbear to censure or question those works. How vain a thing is it to judge, when we do not understand, or to say that is not done well, which we know not how it is done! Doubtless, *We cannot order our speech* (about such things) *before God, by reason of darkness*; and therefore we should tremble to speak rashly or hardly of them. *Elihu* heightens the point yet further in the next words.

Vers. 20. *Shall it be told him that I speak? if a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up.*

I find another rendring of these words, in such a tenour as this; *Is there any need that he should be told what I speak?* As if Elihu's meaning were, that God, being omniscient and every where present, needeth not any to bring him a report what men say or do; he knows our doings, and hears all our sayings, though none tell him. *I hearkned and heard* (saith the Lord, Jer. 8. 6.) *He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?* If any man behave himself amiss, or speak amiss, God seeth it, God heareth it. The *Omnipotent* needs no-helper, the *Omniscient* needs no informer, no intelligencer, to bring him an account of what is done or spoken: *Is there any need* (saith Elihu, according to this reading) *that he should be told what I speak?*

We render

Shall it be told him that I speak?

*Verbo forensi
videtur ut
esse initio ven-
sit. An narra-
bitur, vel in
acta referretur.
Merit.*

*An aliquis au-
debit ei narra-
re quum locu-
tus fuero sic;
nempe ut tu lo-
cutus es de gu-
bernatione Dei.
Hic.*

Here some, instead of the word *told* translate *record*; shall it be recorded, registered or written in a book, *that I speak*, that is, that I have undertaken thy cause as thou hast stated it? Shall this be recorded, and the record sent to God, that I intend to be thy Advocate? Surely no; neither I, nor any man of wisdom or discretion will undertake to speak in this matter, after thy manner. *Shall it be told him that I speak?* I dare not, I would not have it told him that I will, for a World.

Hence Note, First;

No man who understands himself, will venture upon the doing or speaking of any thing that may provoke God, or be displeasing to him.

Will any wise man be an Advocate to plead a Cause, which he knows will, upon just grounds, offend and distast an earthly Judge? The Preacher (saith Solomon, meaning himself, Eccl. 12. 10.) *sought to find out acceptable words*; the Hebrew is, *words of delight*, or, *words of the will*: He meaneth not flattering words, or men-pleasing words, but such words as may profit men, or please men for their profit, that is (as the Apostle speaks, Rom. 15. 2.) *for their good to edification*. Now, if we should not provoke men,

but

but seek to find out (in the sence given) words acceptable to them, should we not much more take heed of speaking any thing to the provocation of God? Should we not seek to find out words of delight and acceptation with him, *words of his Will*, that is, words every way agreeable to his holy will?

Secondly, As *Elihu* feared such a report should be made to God,

Note;

It is high presumption to do or speak amiss, not fearing God should know of it.

We are afraid to do that evil which may be reported to great persons, who have power to punish us: If such a man be told (say some) what we have done, what will become of us? Many are not afraid to do evil, who yet are afraid it should be told their betters what evil they have done. Servants will sometimes thus check children in a Family, when they have done amiss, *We will tell your Father, we will do your errand to your Mother*; that's a dreadful word to a child that hath any reverence of Father or Mother, to say, *I will tell your Father and Mother of you*. The Lord knoweth all that we do amiss (as was said before) though no man tell him; but shall it be told to God what such and such men speak or do, and will they speak or do it still? shall it be told God what they speak, and against whom they speak? shall it be told God whom they reproach, whom they revile? and will they venture it? 'Tis dangerous when such Tales are truly told in the ears of God against the men of the World; they were better have Tale told, and reports made against them to all the Princes of the earth, than have reports made to God against them. To have a peer soul, upon just grounds, telling God what evil men have done against him, how they have slandered and reproached him, how they have oppressed and vexed him, will come at last to a sad account against them. *Shall it be told God that I speak?* (saith *Elihu*) And shall it be told God that we do evil, and we regard it not? Shall we answer those that tell us, they have told, or will tell God of our evil doings, as impudent children and servants do such as threaten them with telling their Parents and Masters of their evil doings, *What care we? do if you will?* O let us take heed how we do or speak that, which, if told in the ears of God, may

may cause blame, and bring his displeasure upon us. There are a sort of Tale-bearers very odious in the sight of God and all good men; such are spoken of, *Prov. 11. 13. Prov. 18. 8.* But they who bring reports to God (as *Joseph* did to his Father *Jacob*, concerning his brethren, *Gen. 37. 2.*) of the evils done by men, such Tale-bearers (if I may so call them) do but their duty; and as their reports are accepted with God, so they hasten wrath upon evil men (*Luke 18. 7.*) *Shall it be told him that I speak?*

If a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up.

*Si dicent, Heb
scil. apud se, il-
lud nemo, se
velle talem ser-
monem Deo
narrare. Pisc.*

That is, if any man speak, if a wise man speak, and if he speak as wisely as he can, and place his words in the best order he can, yet if he shall desire (as *Job* hath done) to come near unto God, and plead with him, *surely he shall be swallowed up.* *Job*, in the hottest of those desires to plead with God, did not (as hath formerly been noted in favour of him) challenge God; he did not think himself a Match for God in pleading his cause before him, he (good man) was far from such a presumptuous spirit: yet because he insisted so much upon that desire of pleading his cause with God, *Elihu* had reason to check him in such language as this, *If a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up.* We that are dust and ashes may not be so bold with God, 'tis best for us to lye at his foot, and let him do what he will with us, only beg of him that we may improve his dealings, and profit by his corrections; if the wisest and holiest of men shall speak otherwise, *Surely they shall be*

Swallowed up.

The word implies, that a man so speaking shall be ruined and brought to nought. *Mr. Broughton* renders, *Would any man plead when he shall be undone?* No man but a mad man would speak in a business wherein he must needs be ruined. We say well, *swallowed up*, that is, both he and his understanding shall be utterly confounded. This phrase of speech is often used in Scripture when a greater power undertakes a lesser: thus fire swalloweth up stubble, and oppressors their poor underlings. *David* saith of his enemies, with respect to the greatness of their malice (*Pf. 56. 1. Pf. 57. 3*) *They would swallow me up.* Possibly they had not power enough to do it, or no fitting opportunity to do it, but they wanted no will to do

do it, *They would swallow me up* if they could, that is, they would make an utter end of me, or diſpatch me quite. So this word is uſed in ſeveral other places (*Iſa. 28. 7.*) *They are ſwallowed up of wine.* Some ſwallow down the wine ſo long, till the wine ſwalloweth them up, the wine gets the maſtery over them, and *they are no longer* (as we ſpeak proverbially) *their own men.* The Apoſtle gives order concerning the inceſtuous perſon that had been caſt out of the Church (*2 Cor. 2. 5.*) *receive him* (ſaith he) *left he be ſwallowed up of over-much ſorrow,* that is, left ſorrow get the maſtery of him. It is not good that the floods of ſorrow (though it be a ſorrow for ſin) ſhould prevail over us, ſo as to ſwallow us up in the gulph of deſpair. Again, while the Apoſtle aſſures us, and would have us triumph in that aſſurance, that death ſhall never do a godly man any hurt, he thus expreſſeth it (*1 Cor. 15. 54.*) *Death is ſwallowed up in victory,* that is, in and by the victory of Jeſus Chriſt: *He, by dying, quite overcame death; he did not only wound it, and worit it, or get the better of it, or rout it, but totally ruin'd it, as to any power of hurting us; all which, and whatſoever elſe concerns the death of death, and the deſtruction of the grave, is wrapt up in that one word, Death is ſwallowed up in victory.* And therefore alſo it is ſaid by the ſame Apoſtle, (*2 Cor. 5. 4.*) *Mortality ſhall be ſwallowed up of Life.* Jeſus Chriſt hath brought in ſuch a life through the Goſpel, as ſhall at laſt put an utter end to Mortality. Our Mortality now by degrees puts an end to, or ſwalloweth up our Lives, but then Life will quite ſwallow up, or put an end to our Mortality; that is, our Mortality ſhall be quite removed and taken out of the way, by that Life which Chriſt hath purchaſed for his people by his own death. All theſe Scriptures ſhew the force of the word, here uſed by *Elihu*, when he ſaith, *If a man ſpeak, ſurely he ſhall be ſwallowed up.*

If a man ſpeak;

How? or to whom? The answer is, *If a man ſpeak to God, he ſhall be ſwallowed up.* But ſhall every one that ſpeaks to God be ſwallowed up? Not ſo; therefore we muſt go to the manner of ſpeaking. If a man ſpeak to God, not keeping his diſtance, if a man ſpeak to God without a Mediatour, he ſhall be ſwallowed up, as a drop of water is ſwallowed up of the Ocean, or as a
spark

*Reveretur vir
ille fulgore cel-
stutinis &
Majestatis
eius perterritus*

spark of fire is swallowed up in a great flame, or as the light of a Candle, or Glow-worm, is swallowed up by the Sun; there is no standing for the Creature before God, in such a nearness of access, but by faith in a Mediator; *If a man speak he shall be swallowed up.* Man is no match for God, or he is a most unequal match.

Yet further, these words may note the conquest of the mind or understanding of man, by an object which is too high and excellent for it; for then his thoughts, yea and his Reason too, are swallowed up, and he is carried out of himself, as a man in an extasie or trance. When St. Paul was caught up to the third heavens, and heard unspeakable words, he was swallowed up with the greatness of the matter, and was in a divine extasie, whether in the body he could not tell, or whether out of the body he could not tell (2 Cor. 12. 2, 3, 4.) Thus (saith Elihu) shall that man be swallowed up, who over-boldly speaks to God about the great mysteries of providence, or about any matter too high for him. And therefore, O Job, thou hast not done well to speak so often of pleading with God; and surely, if any man after thy example, speak complainingly of what God hath done, or himself hath suffered at the hand of God, he is sure to be undone, *He shall be swallowed up.*

Hence observe;

Man is not able to bear the Glory and Majesty of God.

God dwells in the light which no man can approach unto (1 Tim. 6. 16.) Mans darkness is not able to comprehend Gods light; if he venture too near it, he will soon be swallowed up. The vulgar Latine renders that place (Proverbs 25. 27.) *He that is a searcher of Majesty shall be oppressed by the Glory; that is, whosoever searcheth boldly into the Majesty of God, shall be swallowed up by the Glory of God.* We translate that text in the Proverbs thus, *For men to search their own glory, is no glory.* There is a truth in the former translation, though it be not a true translation, for, a man that searcheth into the Majesty of God, shall be overpowered with his Glory. And as man is soon overpowered, or swallowed up by the Majesty of God, so also by and in the Mysteries of God. Christ told his disciples (John 16. 12.) *That he had many things to say unto them, which they were not able to bear.* If they who had received so much grace, could not bear the deeper mysteries of

*Qui persequatur
est Majestatem
opprimetur a gloria.
Vulg.*

of the Gospel, spoken to them by Christ clothed with frail flesh, how much lesse can any man bear the Majesty of God in speaking to him, or, God speaking to him in his Majesty! And so some translate and read the words of *Elihu* in the text under hand, *For if he speak, man shall be devoured or swallowed up*; that is, if God speak, man (who before thought himself *Some-body*, or that he was able to reason with him) will be quite confounded in himself by the infinite wisdom of God, his tongue will faulter or cleave to the roof of his mouth, and he rendered unable to speak one word in his own defence. *Moses* (*Exod. 19. 12.*) was commanded to set bounds about Mount *Horeb*, that the people might not come too neer; the reason was, that the people might by those bounds be warned, not to be curious or over-bold in their approaches to the Majesty of God, nor over-busie in prying into his Secrets. As if it had been said, if you come to neer, you will be even swallowed up. *Moses* repeating to the *Israelites* the terrible Majesty of God in giving the Law at Mount *Horeb*, minds them in what a trembling frame they then were (*Deut. 5. 24, 25, 26.*) *And ye said, behold the Lord our God hath shewed us his glory, and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire; we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth* (which implieth, that man, in this life, cannot bear the fuller manifestation of God, and live.) Now therefore, why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of God any more, then we shall die. What was this great fire? It was God himself, that is, an extraordinary appearance of God, who is several times in Scripture exprest by fire. As if they had said, We acknowledge that we have had wonderful condescension and mercy from God, that we have heard him speak and live; but, that we live, is not only a mercy but a miracle; therefore we poor wormes dare not run the hazzard a second time, if we hear him speak any more, we shall die: Therefore they desired *Moses* (who in that was a type of Christ, *Gal. 3. 19.*) to go neer, and be as a Mediator between them and God, that they might not have to do with God immediately, but receive the Law by his hand. Such is the infinite Majesty of God (though it will be our blessedness in the next life, for ever to enjoy it) that here in this Life we are not able to receive it. The Glory of God is so pure, that man clothed with corruptible flesh & blood cannot stand before it; the

very glimpses of it astonish, and leave us for dead, *Rev.* 1. 16, 17. Man must dye before he can see God and live; his body must be glorified before, he can bear that weight of glory, which consists in beholding the face of God, or, in knowing him (in our proportion) as we are known (*1 Cor.* 13. 12.)

But though (as the *Israelites* there said of themselves) we cannot hear God speak and live, yet cannot we speak to God and live, or, and not be swallowed up?

I answer it in these three things. First, If a man speak to God, as questioning his dealings with him, or, as calling God to an account (which in some sense *Job* did, and therein went beyond his line) he shall be swallowed up.

Secondly, If any man speak to God, as presuming that he can compass, fathom, and understand God, or all the dealings of God with man, that man shall surely be swallowed up. *The thoughts of God are above our thoughts, and his wayes above our wayes, as high as the heaven is above the earth, Isa.* 55. 9.

Thirdly, If we speak to God in our own name, or in a self-righteousnesse, then also we shall surely be swallowed up. *Job* (as we have acquitted him before) never attempted to speak to God in his own righteousnesse, though he often magnified his own righteousnesse both before and towards men. *Woe to all the righteousnesse of man before the most righteous God.* But *Job* was too bold (according to the first answer) in asking an account, or a reason of God, concerning his sufferings; there was his failing, and for that he received this check by *Elihu*, *If a man speak, he shall be swallowed up.*

The meanest, the poorest believing soul may come and speak, and speak boldly to God in the name of *Jesus Christ* (*Heb.* 4. 16.) Thus we may come and welcome, coming thus we shall not be swallowed up with the M ; ity, much lesse with the wrath or displeasure of God. If coming thus we are swallowed up, it will be only with the love and favour of God, with the goodness and kindness of God : And to be swallowed up thus, will be the sweetest morsel that ever we swallowed, even perfect blessednesse and life for evermore. When once death is swallowed up in victory, and mortality of life, then shall we be swallowed up in glory. And therefore whatsoever the Lord doth with us or ours in this world, let us be silent before him,
humbly

humbly adoring his Sovereignty and Wisdom, not in the least questioning either his Righteousness or his Goodness; for if a man speak so, *Surely he shall be dreadfully swallowed up.*

J O B, Chap. 37. Vers. 21, 22.

21. *And now men see not the bright light which is in the Clouds: but the wind passeth and cleanseth them.*

22. *Fair weather cometh out of the north: With God is terrible Majesty.*

THe two verses last opened, may be taken as a Parenthesis to the former discourse concerning Gods wonderful works in nature, forming those dreadful impressions of Thunder and Lightening, Storms & Tempest, in the Air; whereby *Elihu* having repress'd (as he supposed) the swelling of *Job's* spirit, by calling him to teach them what to say to God in his cause, for they (as he had handled it) *could not order their speech, by reason of darkness,* nor durst *Elihu* venture that it should be told God, he intended to speak, knowing, or foreseeing that if he made such an attempt, he might soon be swallowed up by the incomprehensible greatness and glory of God.

Elihu, I say, having made this little diversion, or digression (as he had done sometimes before) to cool and calm the spirit of *Job*, he returns to his former matter, in these words, and considers further the works of God, in those higher Regions, the Aereal heavens, how he muffles up, and covers the light, and how he unvail's and opens it again by his own power, and according to the pleasure of his will. The words are plain, according to our translation; I shall open them briefly as they are here set down, and then give out a further reading of them, which raises the scope and intendment of *Elihu* yet higher.

Vers. 21. *And now men see not the bright light which is in the Clouds.*

And now. Some have conjectured, that at this very instant of time while *Elihu* was discoursing, there happened a sudden change in the Air, or in the face of the Heavens; therefore he saith, *and now*, do not the heavens grow dark, so that men cannot see the bright light which is in the Clouds? as if here were a preparation to that *Whirlwind* or *Tempest*, out of which God himself is said to speak to *Job*, at the beginning of the next chapter.

Yet, I apprehend, we need not expound the word [*now*] so strictly, with respect to the present season or moment of time, but rather to the present matter; as we often use that particle *Now*, both in speech and writing, not so much to denote the direct instant, or present time, as for a leading word to the matter which is to follow.

And, now men see not (or they cannot see) the bright light which is in the Clouds.

Light is the most visible thing in the world; though indeed we are not so properly said to see the Light at all, as to see all things by the light; for it is *Light which maketh manifest*, as the Apostle speaks (*Ephes. 5. 13.*) But though Light be (in vulgar sense) so visible in its own nature, and (in strictest sense) that which maketh all things visible, yet by accident, or by some providential interposition, light it self is not alwayes to be seen. Light is often hidden from our eyes, and then (as *Elihu* speaks here) *men see not the bright light*. The word which we translate *bright light*, signifies the *whiteness* of *Snow*, and I find it applied (*Lev. 13. 2.*) to the whiteness of Leprosie; if there shall appear in the flesh a bright (or shining) spot, a spot like snow, then, &c. And hence it is said of *Gehazi* (*2 Kings 5. 27.*) that when his master called him to account about his going after *Naaman*, & found him flattering and faulty, he laid that sore judgement upon him, *The leprosie therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee and unto thy seed for ever; and he went out of his presence a leper as white as Snow*. It is this word, which signifies, as any extraordinary whiteness and clearness, so the clearness and whiteness of Snow in particular, which hath a kind of transparency in it, and is full of light: Yet the light which is in the Clouds when the Sun shineth,

ברור
Proprie candi-
dus, unde
ברור
Candens lepra.
Druf.
Proprie denotat
nivum instar e-
gregie splendi-
dum & candi-
dum esse. Rab.
Kihi.

shineth, is much more bright than Snow. Now, men see not the bright light

which is in the Clouds,

Or, in the Skie; for the word here used (as hath been shew-
ed before) signifies the Skie, the Firmament, and sometimes the
Air, as well as the Clouds, and it imports the natural thinness of
these Coelestial Bodies, in that higher and upper Region of the
World. *Men see not the bright light which is in the Clouds.* Light
is properly in the Sun; the Sun is the vessel, the vehicle, the seat,
the chariot of Light; but as Light is in the Sun subjectively, so
Light is in the Clouds objectively, and also as they are a Medium
through which the Light is conveyed and passeth to us. Yet som-
times men see not that bright Light which is in the Clouds, for
Clouds being very thick or thickened, they become to us as an
opacous Body, through which the Light can neither find nor make
its way, and then there's no beholding the Light of the Sun shining
upon them in its greatest brightness; while the Air is thus Cloud-
ed, *Men see not the bright Light which is in the Clouds.*

פרו
Aethera tenui
ejus substantia,
nam פרו
significat com-
minuere, Drus.

Hence note;

God can make that which is most visible in it self, invisible.

INTO HIS.

There is alwayes bright Light in the Air, when and where the
Sun is up, and gotten above the Horizon. The Sun shines conti-
nually, how dark soever the weather be; but God can draw such a
Curtaine of Clouds, Vapours and Mists, in the day time, between
us and the bright face of the Sun, that we cannot behold it. Light
alwayes is, but Light is not alwayes to be seen; when Clouds
come between, the Sun is darkened in the clear day.

We may infer as a further improvement of natural things, to
those which are spiri ual, That the light of God's face, or counte-
nance, that is, the light of his favour, shines ever towards his faith-
ful servants, though it be not alwayes seen, Clouds coming be-
tween may shadow them from that blessed Light (*Psal. 97. 2.*)
Clouds and darkness are round about him, that is, his dispensations
are dark and cloudy; yet, as then, *Righteousness and Judgement*
are the habitation of his Throne, that is, as then he doth right to all
sorts of men, so, then also Mercies and Loving-kindnesse stand
round

round about his Throne, or, as the Apostle expresseth it (*Heb. 4. 16.*) his Throne is then, *A Throne of Grace*, that is, he hath Grace or Favour in his heart, to bestow upon all his People, who come to him, not with a presuming, but a believing boldness. Our sins and transgressions are called, *a Cloud, a thick Cloud* (*Isa. 44. 22.*) *I have blotted out as a thick Cloud thy transgressions, and as a Cloud thy sins.* Sins are Clouds, and those Clouds often hinder us from seeing the bright light of the face of God shining upon us; and as our sins usually hinder us from seeing that bright light which is in the face of God, so God sometimes, to try the graces, the faith, the patience of his people, or to see what they will do, how they will behave themselves in a dark and deserted state (God I say, sometimes for these and such like ends) with-draws himself, and will not suffer them to see the bright light of his pleased face. As the light of the things of this world, so of that other and better world, is often hid, or the comfort of them is concealed from us. *Light is sown for the Righteous*; it doth not always spring up and appear to the righteous. Luther chiefly insists upon this mystical interpretation or application of the text, giving it out by way of similitude; *As* (saith he) *the light of the Sun is many times covered with a Cloud, and sometimes hindered by Eclipses,* so the light of comfort, or peace and joy in this world, is hidden from the eyes of the people of God; yet by and by he sends a comfortable and powerful gale, to blow away or disperse those Clouds, and then the light of his countenance & favour shines freely upon them again. And let this be remembred, that when their day is a day of darkness and gloominesse, yet the Light shines still, the favour of God is towards them still, though it appears not; and when they have been a while exercised under this Darknesse, Light will return as it followeth in the text, *Men see not the bright light which is in the Clouds,*

But the wind passeth and clearseth them.

The wind passeth. Quest. But what is the wind?

Answ. The wind is a hot and dry exhalation, raised from the Earth by the power of the heavenly bodies, which being repell'd or forced back by the coldness of the middle Region, moves obliquely or flantingly, sometimes very violently through the air. The Latine word (*ventus*) signifying the wind, is derived by some Grammarians

rians from a word (*vehementia*) noting the vehement or forcible motion of it, or as others (*a veniendo*) from a word signifying to come, because it comes this way and that way, at times every way; or as our blessed Saviour expresseth it (*John 3. 8.*) *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth.*

The supream or supernatural cause, both making and moderating or governing the wind, is God himself: For though that text in the Holy Gospel last mentioned saith, *The wind bloweth where it listeth*, yet is to be understood only in reference to man; it bloweth where it listeth, for all man, man can neither direct it, nor controule or check it. But as to God, the wind bloweth where he listeth, not where it self listeth; 'tis he who gathereth the wind in his fists (*Pro. 30. 4.*) 'Tis he who bringeth them out of his treasures (*Psal. 135. 7.*)

The natural remote cause of the wind, is the power of the Sun and Starrs (as Philosophers well agreeing with reason tell us) drawing up those exhalations, and attenuating them into a fineness for that purpose.

The natural, neere, or next cause (say they) of the winds, is the coldness of the middle Region, which will not suffer the aspiring exhalation to rise higher, but thrusts it back, and so it moves hither or thither, side-wise, or along this lower Region of the air towards the Earth, doing those services, and sometimes strange exploits, with which experience acquaints us daily.

By this Meteor, the wind, the life of man is in a great measure maintained. For though it be a truth, that *no man can live* (as we say) *by the air*; yet it is as true, that no man can live without the air: Did not the Lungs inspire and expire, draw in and send out fresh air, man would soone be suffocated and dye; and 'tis most certain, that the heart, and blood, and whole body of man, are very much affected, according to the nature of the wind or air, in which they breath. *Plinie* tells us, that *man may live without food seven dayes*, but no man can live one houre, being wholly intercluded from wind and air. And hence the Latine word (*anima*) which signifies the soul, not only as to the substance of it, (which is immortal) but as to the subsistence of it in the body (in which respect 'tis mortal, being no more than life, this word I say in the Latine) is supposed to come from that Greek word (*ἀνέμος*) which

which properly ſignifieth the wind. The ſame notion of life may be collected from the Hebrew word *Nepheth*, which is indifferently tranſlated, *Soul, Life, Wind*. And ſo the life of man is not only called *wind* (as *Job* called his, *Chap. 7. 7.*) becauſe of the frailty or ſpeedy paſſing of it away; but becauſe the continuance or abiding of it in the body, is by the taking in and ſending out of wind.

I have already at the 9th verſe of this Chapter, ſhewed the ſeveral uſes which God hath appoynted the winds unto, both in a way of Mercy, and of Judgment: They purge the air, they gather the Clouds for Rain, they ſcatter them, and ſo make faire weather, they move the waters, which otherwiſe by ſtanding ſtill would putrifie, corrupt, and grow unwholſome, yea infectious both to man and beaſt, they reſreſh the Earth, and cauſe all ſorts of vegetables to flouriſh, they are alſo, as it were, the food and nourishment, the meat and drink of mans life; there's no living without them.

I ſhall not ſtay further to diſcourſe or diſcover the nature and the wonders, or the wonderfull nature of the wind, having done ſomewhat towards it (as was ſaid) before at the ninth verſe. Only take notice of this uſe of the wind, with reſpect to the Clouds, mentioned expreſſly in this Text, *The wind paſſeth*

And cleanſeth them.

It was ſaid in that former part of this Chapter (where *Elihu* ſpoke of the wind) *That the winds are the Broomes of Heaven*, they ſweep the Heavens, they drive away the Clouds, the miſts and foggs which dull and obſcure the air. The expreſſion here in the Text ſorts well with that Metaphor, *The wind paſſeth and cleanſeth them*, that is, the wind paſſing through the air, cleanſeth it from thoſe Clouds, and ſo cauſeth the light of the Sun to ſhine forth freely and fully to us again. The wind at one time gathers the Clouds, and the wind at another time ſcatters them: *The wind is a cleaner*. So much is ſuppoſed in that Negative expreſſion (*Jer. 4. 11.*) where the Lord threatens to ſend a *high wind from the Wilderneſs, but not to fan nor to cleanſe. I* (ſaith the Lord) *will ſend a high wind; but to what purpoſe? not for thoſe profitable and comfortable purpoſes, to fan, cool, and cleanſe the Air, but rather to wither and blaſt the fruits of the Earth, or to over-*
throw

throw and bear down all before it. The text in hand speaks of a comfortable purpose of God in letting the wind out of his Treasures, it bloweth away the Clouds which obstruct the passage of the Light to us: *The wind passeth and cleanseth them.*

Hence note;

What-ever stands in the way of our comforts, God can quickly remove it.

When Clouds cover the light from us, God hath his wind ready to chase them away, and clear up the weather. Never did any such thick and dark Cloud of sorrow and trouble hang over the heads, or fill the hearts of the people of God, but he had means at hand to dispell and scatter it, or he could scatter it himself without means. When dreadfull Clouds of danger looked black upon and threatened the Church of God during the Reign of Julian the Apostate, *Athanasius* said, *It is but a little Cloud, a wind will shortly cleanse it away.* His meaning was, now we are compassed about with fear and trouble, but peace and prosperity will not stay long before they return.

Nabecula est, cind transibit.

This is true also if we carry it yet in a more spiritual way, as to those Clouds of sorrow which often darken and afflict our minds in the midst of outward prosperity, or in the clearest Sunshine-day of peace that ever was in this world; when these inward Clouds dwell, as it were, upon the soul, the Lord hath a wind which passeth and cleanseth them away too. What is that wind? it is his holy Spirit. The word in the text, is used often to signify, not only the natural wind in the air, but that divine wind the Holy Ghost, who is compared unto the wind in many places of Scripture, and his operations are like those of the wind: For *as the wind bloweth where it listeth, we hear the sound thereof, but know not whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; so (saith Christ) is every one that is born of the Spirit (John 3.8.)* And as our Regeneration is wrought by that secret, yet strong and powerfull wind, so likewise is our consolation. The Spirit of God doth those offices in our hearts which the winds do in the air: As the wind dispells and sweeps away the Clouds which are gathered there; so the Spirit of God cleanseth our souls from those Clouds and fogs of ignorance and unbelief, of sin and lust, which are gathered in, and would, else, abide for ever upon our hearts. From all these Clouds

Bolduc:

H h h h

the

the holy Spirit of God cleanseth us in the work of Regeneration: And from all these Clouds which trouble our Consciences, the holy Spirit cleanseth us in the work of Consolation.

Some Interpreters expound the words only in this mystical sense, quite rejecting the proper. But though, by allusion, we may improve the words to this spiritual sense, yet doubtless *Elihu* speaks here of the winds properly taken, or of the natural winds, and their sensible effects; and so, according to our reading, this Text, as it hath been opened, teacheth us what sudden changes God makes in the Air. Now the light is shut up, or shut in, and anon it is let out again, and all by the powerful hand of God, who doth administer these things to us interchangeably, as himself pleaseth.

Secondly, The text, according to another reading (which others insist much upon, and conceive pertinent to the scope of *Elihu*) runs thus; *For now men cannot see the bright light in the Clouds, when the wind passeth and cleanseth them.* Mr Broughton translates clearly so, his words are these; *And now men cannot look upon the light, when it is bright in the Air, then a wind passeth and cleanseth it.* And then the sense of the whole verse is plainly a setting forth of the excellency, or superexcellency rather, of the light of the Sun, which is so clear and splendid, that if the Air be but cleansed from Clouds, if it be but a pure Air, no man is able to face it, nor his eye directly to behold it. We behold all things by the light of the Sun, but no man can steadfastly behold the light in the Sun; no man can look right up to the Sun, when it casts forth its fiery rayes, and shines bright upon us. And this some conceive so genuine and clear an exposition of the Text, that the light of it may seem to obscure and darken all others. Now, according to this second reading, the whole verse, with that which followeth, contains an argument to confirm the former proposition, laid down at the 20th verse: *If a man speak, he shall be swallowed up*, that is, if a man come too nigh unto God, and be over-bold with him, he shall even be swallowed up of his brightness & that it is so, I prove thus (saith *Elihu*) The very light of the Sun, which shines in the Air, is so bright and so powerful, that no man is able to hold up his eyes against it: And if so, then from the lesser to the greater, his argument riseth thus. *If when the Sun shineth brightly, no man is able to look upon it, then much less are we able to behold the bright*

Majesty

*Item enim non
vestiunt (ho-
mines) lucem
(quam) nitida
est in superiori-
bus nubibus,
quas ventus
transiens pur-
gavit. Tran-
slatio Jun:*

*Nemo potest
adversis oculis
nitidum solem
contueri, quis
ergo ferat pra-
sentiam Maje-
statis dei. Jun:*

Majesty of God, or to comprehend his greatness. This rendring hath a very profitable sense in it, leading Job to reason thus with himself, I plainly see by all that hath been discoursed, that for as much as I am not able to bear the brightness, which breaks through the Clouds, nor the noise of Thunder (of which Elihu spake before) for as much as I am not able to bear the fierceness of a great Rain, nor the coldness of the Frost, nor the impetuosity of the Wind, nor the violence of a Tempest, for as much as I am not able to bear the clear light of the Sun shining in my face, therefore surely I am much less able to bear the Majesty and glory of God, if he should unvail or open himself unto me. Thus I say, Elihu leads Job to an humbling conviction, that he could not stand before the glorious Majesty of God, because he was not able to endure the brightness of the Sun shining upon him. If the light of the Sun, the Created light, be too excellent for mortal eyes, then what is God the Creating light? what is God, who dwelleth in light, who is light, and in whom there is no darkness at all? 'Tis a Maxime in Nature, A visible object exceeding bright, dazzles the eye, and even destroys the sight. And why was all this spoken to Job? Surely to bring him upon his knees (as afterwards it did) to humble him, to take him off from his frequent appeals or desires of approach to God for the debate and determination of his cause. The sum of all in a word is as if Elihu had said, O Job, thou canst not see the bright light of the Air, if the wind do but fan it and cleanse the Clouds, how then shalt thou be able to dispute thy cause before God, to whom the most glorious light of the Sun, is but a Cloud, yea but as a clod of earth? The next words carry on this conviction yet further.

Excellens visibile visum destruit.

Vers. 22. Fair weather cometh out of the North: with God is terrible Majesty.

The former part of this verse hath a respect to the latter part of the former; The wind passeth and cleanseth them, fair (or bright) weather cometh out of the North. It hath been shewed before in opening the 9th verse of this Chapter, that the South wind ingenders the Rain, and causeth foule weather; here (saith Elihu) fair weather cometh out of the North. The North wind (saith Selemon, Pro. 25. 22.) driveth away Rain, so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue. The North wind blows coldly, yet it blowes clearly, it clears the Air from Clouds. We render, Fair weather

H h h h 2 cometh

אור
Aurum.

Lux quæ in
auro splendit.
Eccl.

cometh out of the North. The word translated *fair weather*, signifieth gold; gold cometh out of the North. Fair weather in its season, is worth much gold, and may well be called *golden weather*; the Sun in such seasons gilds both the Air and Earth with his precious beams. And I find an ancient Interpreter sticking much upon the strict signification of the Hebrew word, maintaining that gold is to be taken here properly; *Out of the North cometh gold*, because (saith he) in the Northern Countreyes, through the greatness of Cold, the heat in those parts is so pent in the bowels of the Earth, that it more fully concocts and refines the gold, than in other places: *Out of the North comes gold*, that is, the purest gold. But, I conceive, that was not at all the business of *Elihu* here; and I find the Scripture in another place expressing that which is shining, beautifull, and precious, by gold, (*Zach. 4. 12.*) The oyle which the two Olive-branches emptied out of themselves through the two golden pipes, is called gold, or golden oyle, that is, bright oyle, pure oyle; and so becaute the light of the Sun shining in fair weather is purer and more defecate than the purest gold, therefore this Scripture expresseth it by gold; *through the North a golden cometh*, saith Mr Broughton.

Again, Some taking the word *gold* here metaphorically for any precious thing, take the word *North* metaphorically also for any evil thing, that is, for any affliction, trouble, or sorrow which we meet with in this world; these are indeed as a cold chilling North-wind, and so they will needs give the sence of this Scripture mystically thus, *Out of the North cometh precious things*; that is, afflictions (which are as a cold chilling North-wind) make us more precious; or, through cold chilling afflictions, we are made more and more precious. *Job* saith, and this text may have such an allusion (and I give it no further) to that (*Chap. 23. 10.*) *When he hath tried me, I shall come forth gold*; that is, I shall come forth precious. Whether God doth try us by the North or by the South, whether by the heat of prosperity, or by the cold of adversity, if we are under his tryal, and are faithfull, we come out gold, we come out more precious from our tryals, than we came in. The Apostle hath a like allusion (*1 Pet. 1. 6, 7.*) *Ye are now for a season in heaviness (if need be) through manifold temptations, (that is, troubles, tribulations and afflictions) That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth,*
though

though it be tried with fire, might be found to praise, &c. Thus Out of the North comes Gold, or this precious thing, a tryed faith. That's a truth from the allegorical sense of this place; but I shall not stay upon it.

The proper meaning is, *Elihu* would have *Job*, and all men know, God hath his several Climates or places, out of which he sends and dispenceth fair and foul weather; foul weather cometh out of the South, and fair out of the North.

Out of the North cometh fair weather.

The Hebrew word rendred *North*, signifieth *hiding*, because the remote parts of the *North* are much hidden from the Sun, a great part of the year being quite dark; and therefore the Northern Climate may well be called the *hidden part* of the world. Some put a Question upon those words of *David* (Psal. 75. 6.) *Promotion comes neither out of the East, nor out of the West, nor from the South*: Here are three of the foure Winds specified, and it is said, *Promotion* comes from neither of them. But why is it not also said, that *Promotion* comes not from the *North*? that's the question. I answer, It were answer enough to say, that we ought not to put questions curiously about such things; it should satisfie us that the Spirit of God is pleased to say it is so, and no more. Yet some tell us, the reason why it is not said, *Promotion* cometh not from the *North*, is, because indeed it cometh out of the *North*, which, say they, is intimated in the Hebrew word for the *North*, which signifies *hidden* or *secret*. *Promotion* comes not from the *East*, nor *West*, nor *South*, but from the *North*, (saith this Author) it comes from the *North* in a figure or myserie, that is, it comes from some hidden providence or secret hand, which many take no more notice of, than we do of the furthest part of the *North*. God promotes many in this world to power, and sends them great prosperity, we see not how or which way: The causes and contrivances of it are hidden close, and in the breast of God. This also is a truth; in that sence we may say, *Fair weather cometh from the North*. *Promotion* is visible, but the manner of it is a secret, we see not the causes for which, nor the wayes in which it cometh. It is enough to touch these niceties, and to touch them can do no hurt, while the matter arising from them, hath the clear consent of, and is harmonious with o-

IES abscondit
occulavit,
hinc IES sep-
tentrionis aquilo,
quasi abscondi-
ta quia sol ibi
multo per an-
num tempore
ibi non con-
spiciatur.

ther

ther plain places of Scripture. *Fair weather cometh out of the North, and (as it followeth)*

With God is terrible Majesty.

מַלְכוּת celsitudo
majestas : a
מַלְכִּי quidem
deduxit, quod
est confiteri, ce-
lebrare, lauda-
re.
עַל כֹּחַ הַדָּוָה
מַעֲרֹאֲלֵי הַיָּם
יִשְׂרָאֵל. Theod.
καὶ δὲ διὰ
τοῦ βῆτος αὐτοῦ.
Symmach:
Ad deum for-
midolo à lau-
dario. Vulg:

This is the *Epiphonema*, the exulting conclusion of both these verses, yea, of *Elihu's* large discourse concerning the works of God in Naturalls. As if *Elihu* had said, *All these things God doth ; and tell me then, is not terrible Majesty with God ? in God, or with God is terrible Majesty.* The word which we render *Majesty*, comes (say Grammarians) from a root which signifies *to confess, to acknowledge, to celebrate*, because Majesty, Greatness, or Excellency is and ought to be much acknowledged, confessed, and celebrated : The word notes in general, any laudable or praise-worthy thing. *With God all that is, which is worthy to be and ought to be commended, praised, honoured by men and Angels.* We translate well, *With God is Majesty* : Others, *With God is praise*. *Jacob* saith of *Judah*, the Kingly Tribe (*Gen. 49. 8.*) *Thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise.* The *Vulgar Latine* expresseth it thus ; *With God is fearfull praise.* Some read the words as a *Doxology*, or giving of glory unto God, not as we, *With God is terrible Majesty*, but, *unto God be reverent or terrible Majesty* : that is, let the Glory and Majesty of God be acknowledged in all these things, which have been spoken of, in all those strange changes and impressions which he works in the air, and which are obvious unto the eyes of the Children of men. *With God is Majesty, with God is praise, or unto God be praise* for all his works ; and not only praise and Majesty, but

Terrible Majesty,

Majesty to be feared, to be revered, to be dreaded, to be trembled at. With God is terrible Majesty.

Hence note ; First,

Majesty belongs eminently unto God.

With God is Majesty. As the Scripture, speaking of power, saith, *Power belongeth unto God* (*Psal. 62. 11.*) that is, properly, and fundamentally all power is in God ; what-ever power is in the Creature, it is but a derivative from Gods power. So Majesty is originally and fundamentally in God ; what-ever the Majesty of

of the Kings and Princes of this world is, it is but a stream, a ray
 issuing from the Majesty of God, or, as the Greek version hath *μεγαλοθυνη*
 it, from his *Magnificence*. *We may discern the Majesty of God* *Magnificencia*
in every thing that he is, or is spoken of him; The Ma- 70.
jesty of God is in his Greatness, his is a Great Majesty;
The Majesty of God is in his Highness, his is a High Majesty;
The Majesty of God is in his honour, his is a most honourable
Majesty; the Majesty of God is in his Word, he speaks with
Majesty, his is a most Majestical Word; the Majesty of God is in
Works, Majesty is stamp'd and printed upon all that he doth.
What shall I say? there is Majesty in the Wisdom of God, and
Majesty in the Justice of God, and Majesty in the Goodness of
God, and Majesty in the Power of God, there is Majesty in the
Love of God, and there is Majesty in the Wrath of God, there is
Majesty in the Truth and Faithfulness of God; every thing God
hath, hath a Majesty in it; therefore he is said (Psal. 93. 1.)
to be clothed with Majesty. (Psal. 96. 6.) Honour and Majesty
are before him. I, saith David (Psal. 145. 5.) will speak of the
glorious honour of thy Majesty, and of thy wonderful works. Every-
 where the Scripture sets forth the Majesty, the wonderful Maje-
 sty of God.

Note, Secondly;

Gods Majesty is a terrible Majesty.

The Majesty of Kings is dreadful and terrible; but I may say,
 the Majesty of Kings, the Majesty of *Solomon*, and of *Aha-*
shuerus, the Majesty of *Nebuchadnezzar*, and of *Alexander*,
 either, first, in their Robes; or, secondly, in their Buildings;
 or, thirdly, in their Feastings; or, fourthly, in their Follow-
 ers and Attendants (which four do chiefly hold out the Majesty
 of Princes) is but a mean thing, a very little thing, a nothing,
 in comparison of the Majesty, the Glorious Majesty, the
 terrible Majesty of God: His is a terrible Majesty indeed.
 And therefore they are rebuked (*Isa. 26. 10.*) *Who will not be-*
hold the Majesty of the Lord. What? not behold such a dread-
 ful Majesty! such a terrible Majesty! The Scripture sets forth
 not only the Majesty, but the terribleness of the Majesty of God;
 read at leisure, (*Deut. 7. 21. Nehem. 9. 32. Psal. 47. 2.*)

There-

Therefore say unto God, how terrible art thou in thy works! (Ps. 66. 3.) Say this unto God, for (vers. 5.) *He is terrible in his doings toward the children of men, even to all sorts of men, to the great as well as to the small, to the high as well as to the low, to Princes as well as to the People (Psal. 76. 12) He is terrible to the Kings of the earth.* God is terrible in his Majesty to those who have the most terrible majesty. And as the Lord can appear terrible out of all places, so he is most terrible out of his holy places (Psal. 68. 35.) that is, terrible Judgments are sent by God out of his Sanctuaries or holy places, upon all them who prophane or despise, who pollute or abuse his holy things. Take these two Inferences from the consideration of the terrible Majesty of God.

First, *We need not fear the terribleness of any creature, while we have the terrible Majesty of God with us.* As he hath been, so still he is (as the Prophet spake, Isa. 25. 4, 5.) *A strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.* And therefore the Prophet concluded in the latter end of the 5th verse, *The branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low.*

Secondly, If God hath such terrible Majesty, then, as it is a comfort to his people against the terrible ones, so what a terrour should this be to those who are not his people, especially to those who are openly rebellious, who kick against his Majesty, and will not behold with reverence the Majesty of the Lord! Let them remember, *With God is terrible Majesty.* The Prophet foretels a day, wherein the Majesty of the Lord will terrifie the most potent sinners, and make them at their wits end (Isa. 2. 10, 12, 19, 21.) *Enter into the Rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his Majesty. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low; it shall be upon the Cedars of Lebanon, &c. that is upon those that are high like the Cedars of Lebanon, and strong like the Oaks of Bashan: And they shall go into the holes of the Rocks, and into the caves of the earth, &c.* And why all this? the Text answers (vers. 19.) *For fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his Majesty, when he shall arise to shake terribly the earth.* *O the terribleness of Gods Majesty,*

to

to all thoſe who tremble not at his Majesty! to the proud, who are lifted up in their own thoughts, who are high in their own imaginations! yea, the Majesty of the Lord will be terrible to all impenitent ſinners. in that day, I may ſay, more diſtinctly, in theſe four dayes.

First, In the day of Conſcience, or when their own Conſciences are a terrour to them. How ſad is it for a man to have God and his own Conſcience terrible to him at once! When ſinners are awakened, when God ſets their ſins in order before them, they are a terrour to themſelves, as it is ſaid of Paſhur (*Jer. 20. 3.*) *The Lord hath not called thy name Paſhur, but Magor Miſſabib, that is, fear round about; I will make thee a terrour to thy ſelf, thy own Conſcience ſhall be terrible to thee.* A man had better fall into the hands of the moſt cruel Tyrants in the World, than into the hands of his own Conſcience. But when a man is a terrour to himſelf, then to have the Lord a terrour to him likewiſe, to have God appearing in terrible Majesty, how dreadful is it! *The awakened Conſcience of a ſinner carrieth in it, as a thouſand witneſſes, ſo a thouſand terrours; and God in his anger is more terrible than a thouſand conſciences.*

Secondly, God is terrible to ſinners, in the day of outward trouble, when, as David ſpeaks (*Pſal. 65. 5.*) *By terrible things in righteouſneſs he answereth the prayers of his People.* When God is doing terrible things in the World, how miſerable is their caſe, to whom God alſo is a terrour in that day! A godly man when God is doing the moſt terrible things, *ſhaking Heaven and earth*, and (as it were) pulling the world about our ears, yet, becauſe he finds God at peace with him, he is well enough. But as for impenitent ſinners, when God is doing terrible things, what will become of them? I may beſpeak them in the words of the Prophet (*Iſa. 10. 3.*) *What will ye do in the day of your viſitation, and in the deſolation which ſhal come from far? to whom will ye flee for help, and where will ye leave your glory?* As if he had ſaid, who, or what can be a comfort to you, when God is a terrour to you? And therefore, another Prophet fore-ſeing ſuch a terrible day coming, makes this earneſt deprecating prayer (*Jer. 17. 13.*) *O Lord, be not thou a terrour to me in the evil day.* I know an evil, a terrible day is at hand, but Lord I beg this of thee, that thou wilt not be a terrour to me in that day; if men ſhould be a terrour to me, and God a terrour

too, it would be insupportable. Yet thus it will be with the unrighteous, when God doth terrible things in righteousness, and such things he will do in the latter dayes. Take heed, lest God appear with terrible Majesty to you, in such a day.

Thirdly, How terrible is God to impenitent sinners (when awakened) in the day of death! What is Death? In this Book Death is called *The King of Terrours*. Now, if when Death is making its approaches to a person, who lives in a contempt of the wayes and word of God, if when his breath sits upon his lips, ready to depart, and the King of Terrours is ready to tear his caul, and to rend his heart-strings asunder, if then, I say, God appears in terrible Majesty, what condition will such a one be in? To have Death the King of Terrours, and the Living, the ever-living God in terrible Majesty falling upon a poor creature at once, is a thousand deaths at once.

Fourthly, What will sinners do in the day of judgment? that will be a terrible day indeed. The Apostle (2 Cor. 5. 10.) having said, *We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, to receive according to what we have done in the body, whether good or bad*; presently adds, *knowing therefore the terrour of the Lord, we persuade men*; that is, knowing how terrible the Lord will be to impenitent sinners, to all whom he finds in their sins, knowing this terrour of the Lord, and how terrible the Majesty of the Lord will be to such, in that day, *we persuade men*, we do all we can to pluck them out of their sins, and turn them to God in Christ Jesus, who saves his people from their sins; for, to be sure, that will be a most dreadful day to sinners. Thus the Majesty of God will be terrible to the wicked and ungodly, especially in these four dayes. Only they who fear the Lord and take hold of his name by faith, shall be able to stand before his terrible majesty. God will not be a terrour, but a comfort, to them that fear him in every evil day.

Further, the word (as was shewed before) signifies not only Majesty, but Praise, *With God is terrible praise, dreadful praise*.

Hence note, First;

The Lord is most praise worthy.

With the Lord is praise. The Psalmist every where sets forth the

the praise-worthiness of God, and presseth this duty upon us. I shall not stay upon it, only remember, *with the Lord is praise*, that is, he is to be praised. And from the attribute of his praise, or that, *with the Lord is terrible praise*,

Note Secondly;

Even in those things which the Lord doth most graciously for us, and is to be highly praised by us (even in those) he is to be feared, dreaded, and revered.

God is to be praised, not only with joy and thankfulness, but with fear and reverence; *for with him is terrible praise*. It is the express word of Moses, in his song after the destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea (Exod. 15. 11.) *Who is a God like unto thee, glorious in holines, fearful in praises?* We should not be afraid to praise God, no, we should be most forward to praise him, but we should have a holy fear upon our hearts, when we praise him. Praise is the work of heaven, from whence fear shall for ever be banished; there will be perfect love, and perfect love casts out fear, (1 Joh. 4. 18.) What-ever fear hath torment in it (as all fear out of Christ hath) we shall have nothing to do with in that blessed life: And even in this life, praise, which is the work of heaven on earth, should be performed with such a spirit of love, & joy as is without all base, tormenting fear; we should have so much love to God in, and for all the good things he doth, for our soules especially, ye and for our bodies too, in dealing out daily mercies, that it should cast out all that fear which hath torment in it. Yet there is a fear which should possess our spirits while we are praising God, a fear of reverence I mean, which fear (I doubt not) will remain in heaven for ever; Glorified Saints shall praise God with that fear, that is, having an everlasting awe of the Majesty of God upon their hearts. *He is fearful in praises*; and therefore let us so praise him, as remembering our distance, so praise him, as to be afraid of miscarrying in the duty, and so instead of praising, displease him, in stead of honouring, grieve him. This duty of praise is very dreadful. The Psalmist saith, *there is mercy, or forgiveness, with thee, O Lord, that thou mayst be feared* (Psalm. 130. 4.) Not only is the Lord to be feared in his wrath, and in the executions

cutions of his justice, but he is to be feared in his mercy, & in that greatest expression of his favour towards us, the forgiveness of our sins. When we are in the highest exaltations of the mercy of God, and of the God of our mercies, yet then should our hearts be affected with his fear. It is both our duty and our commendation so to fear God, as not to sin against him, or to be kept from sinning against God by the fear of God, that is, lest God should punish us for our sins, and give us to eat the bitter fruit of our own evil doings: But to fear God, because we hear, and are assured, that he is ready to pardon our sins, especially, to fear him when he hath given us a comfortable assurance, that our sins are pardoned; or, even then to be filled with the fear of his great and reverend Name, when we are actually praising him, and magnifying his free grace in Christ, for the pardon of them; this shewes a truly gracious spirit indeed. *With God is terrible Majesty, and with God is terrible praise*; he is at once to be praised and feared. All this *Eliphaz* would fix upon the heart of *Job*, from the consideration of the works of God, his providential works, in the Air; how much more should this fear affect us, when we behold his terrible works of providence upon the Earth? turning the world, as it were, upside down, by the wonderful vicissitudes and revolutions which his hand brings to pass, respecting either Persons and private Families, or whole Kingdomes and Nations. *With God is terrible Majesty.*

J O B, Chap. 37. Vers. 23, 24.

23. *Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out; he is excellent in Power, and in Judgement, and in plenty of Justice: He will not afflict.*

24. *Men do therefore fear him: He respecteth not any that are wise of heart.*

THese two Verses conclude the whole discourse of *Elihu* with *Job*. The 23d verse is Doctrinal, the 24th is the Use or Application of the Doctrine.

In the 23d verse we have a four-fold Doctrine held out concerning God.

First, The Doctrine of his Incomprehensibleness, *We cannot find him out.*

Secondly, Of his Power, *He is the Almighty, he is excellent in Power.*

Thirdly, Of his Righteousness, he excels in Judgement, and plenty of Justice. But though he is thus full of Justice, yet he is also very Gracious, and therefore,

Fourthly, We have the Doctrine of his Mercy and Tenderness towards the Creature in the last words of the Verse, *He will not afflict.* God is infinitely above man in Power and in Wisdom, yet he never useth either the one or the other to the oppression or wrong of any man; *He will not afflict.* This is a very suitable peroration of the whole Narrative or matter declared, which *Elihu* had so long insisted upon.

And having laid down this four-fold Doctrine concerning God, he shews us the use of it in the 24th verse, where we have a practical Inference from what was before asserted concerning God; *Men do therefore fear him, or, therefore men ought to fear him.* As if he had said, Seeing God is thus incomprehensible, thus powerful, seeing he is thus excellent in Judgement, &c in plenty of Justice, as also in Goodness and Mercy; therefore good men do, and all men should fear him. This is a very natural and undeniable Inference, yet *Elihu* doth not leave it bare, but adds a strong inforcement.

ment in the close of the verse, why all men, the greatest of men, the wisest of men should fear God, *For he respecteth not any that are wise in heart.* The wisest, the greatest of men cannot carry it with God, by their wisdom or policy, by their greatness or power, therefore let them fear him. This is the sum and scope of these two verses.

Verf. 23. *Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out.*

שדי
Omnipotens
nominativum
absolutum possum
Pisc.

That is, He is unsearchable and incomprehensible. The Original strictly read, is, *The Almighty, we cannot find him out.* The *Almighty*, is a *Nominative absolute*, as Grammarians speak; we supply that word (*Touching*) As if he had said, should we enter upon a discourse of the Almighty, we cannot find him out. *Touching the Almighty.* That, God is Almighty, and what the word *Shaddai*, here rendred Almighty, doth import, hath been shewed and opened already in other places of this Book, especially in the fifth Chapter at the 17th verse, and in the eighth Chapter at the 3^d and 5th verses; thither I refer the Reader for further satisfaction in that matter, and pass from it here; *Touching the Almighty*

We cannot find him out.

This also I shall pass over in a word, having spoken to it more fully (*Chap. 11. 7.*) where *Zophar* puts this Question, *Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find him out unto perfection?* In which Questions, *Zophar* challenged *Job*, or any man else, to set their understandings upon the tenter, to put all their abilities to the utmost stretch, to find out God if they could, being assured they could not find him out unto perfection. So then, this assertion in the Text, *We cannot find him out*, bearing the same sense with those Questions, I shall not stay upon it. Only,

Note;

God cannot be compassed by the enquiries of man.

Touching the Almighty, we have but this to say of him, *We cannot say much of him, or, how much soever we say of him, we say but a little of what he is, or of what may be said of him, for we cannot find him out.* We may find God, but we cannot find him out. God is to be

be found by every humble, faithful seeker of him. The Prophet (*Isa. 55. 6.*) calls us to that duty of seeking with an assurance of finding, *Seek ye the Lord whilst he may be found*; and so doth David (*Psal. 32. 5.*) *For this*, that is, for pardon of sin, for grace and mercy, or, *for this*, that is, upon the experience which I have had of thy readiness, O Lord, to pardon my sins, *even as soon as I confessed and acknowledged them, for this* (I say) *shall every one that is godly pray unto thee, in a time when thou mayest be found.* God may be found to do us good, and shew us mercy, when we seek him rightly; there is a finding time, or a time while God may be found. Some give no other limit to this *while*, or finding time, than the limit of this life; And to be sure if he be not found while we are in this Life, he can neither be sought nor found after this Life. Yet more strictly, to *seek him while he may be found* (as one of the Rabbins glosseth that place) is to seek him before the Decree comes forth, as the Prophet Zephany speaks (*Chap. 2. 2.*) It is possible we may seek God, and seek him too late, and then there's no finding of him; Only they shall seek and find him, who seek him in the finding time, and they who do so shall certainly find, as was said before, God ready to do them good, and shew them mercy.

But how much soever, or how early soever we seek him, we cannot find him out, that is, we cannot find out how good, how merciful God is, or the utmost extent of his goodness and mercy, which Zophar in the place before cited, calleth a *finding of him out to perfection*. I may give you a five-fold Negative to shew wherein God cannot be found out.

First, We cannot find him out as to the infiniteness of his Essence and Being, that's beyond the line of a created Understanding.

Secondly, We cannot find him out, as to the excellency of his Attributes, or the manner of his being; who can tell how wise God is, how holy, how just, how powerful, how good! We may easily find his divine perfections all the world over, we may find them in every leaf of the book of the Scripture, yea, in every leaf of the book of the Creature, but we cannot find them out any where to perfection.

Thirdly, We cannot find out the depth of his Counsels. God hath some (*Arcana.*) secrets which he hath reserved in his own power.

*Dum adhuc in
hac vita es-
tis. Rab. Jonath.
Deus invenire
potest ubique
Et quovis
tempore ante
obsignata de-
creta. Aben-
ezra.*

power, as Christ told his disciples in the first of the *Acts* (vers. 6.) when they would needs be prying into that secret of his counsel, *the time of restoring the kingdom to Israel*. There are many counsels of God lockt up in his own bosom, which we cannot find out, nor must we be bold and curious in searching into them.

Fourthly, The Lord cannot be found out, no not in his works of Providence, which are acted outwardly, or by which he brings forth his counsels to act (*Psal. 77. 19.*) *His foot-steps are not known*; not only are not any of his secret counsels known, but some of his very foot-steps, his treadings, his goings are not fully known. God goeth so that we cannot find where he goeth, he leaves no track (as we say) behind him (*Rom. 11. 33.*) *How unsearchable are his judgments* (not only his counsels, but, *how unsearchable are his judgments*) *and his ways past finding out*. That's the very expression of the text. There are many providences of God, which we find and feel, which we see, and cannot but see, yet we cannot find them out, that is, we are not able to give a direct answer why God doth this or that, nor how this or that was done. Consider that Scripture (*2 Chron. 31. 20, 21.*) where we have a most singular character of Hezekiah, and of his government; *Thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that which was good, and right, and truth, before the Lord his God; and in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered*. So the 31th chapter concludes; yet the 32^d begins thus, *After these things, and the establishment thereof, Sennacherib King of Assyria came and entred into Judah, and encamped against the fenced Cities*. One would have thought, Hezekiah being thus zealous for the Reformation of the Church of God, in Judah and Jerusalem, and having done all that concerned it with a perfect heart, that surely such a Prince should have lived in peace and prospered all his dayes; yet, presently his Kingdome was invaded by a potent enemy, Sennacherib comes against him, and fills him, and all his people, with fear of utter subversion. This was a secret of providence, very hard to find out, a depth, which who can fathome? That when a good King with his Counsel, had been endeavouring a true Reformation, and that with a perfect heart, he should presently see war at his gates. Solomon saith (*Pro. 16. 7.*) *When a mans ways please the Lord, he makes his enemies to be*

be at peace with him: Yet it was no sooner said of King Hezekiah that his wayes pleased the Lord, but the very next paragraph of his Chronicle reports an enemy making war upon him.

Fifthly, Take this also; We cannot find out God in the dispensations of his Free Grace in the Gospel; there are such mazes, such mysteries of love, and goodness, and kindness in Jesus Christ, as (though it be our duty to be searching after them, and in them, all our dayes, though we ought to be continually digging in those golden Mines, to find out the treasures hidden there, yet) we can never find them out. Therefore the Apostle (*Ephes. 3. 8*) calls them, *The unsearchable riches of Christ*; not, *unsearchable*, because it is unlawful to search after them, but, *unsearchable*, because when we have searched to the utmost we cannot find them out; as he speaks in the close of that chapter; *that we may be able to comprehend with all Saints, the height and depth, and length, and breadth, and to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge*. Under all these considerations (and many, many more) God is past finding out. Whence take three brief Inferences.

First, *Do not search too far* (that is, beyond what is written) *into the counsels of God, no nor into the works of God*. For though, as it is said (*Psal. 111. 2.*) *the works of God are great, sought out by all them that have pleasure therein*; yet they that have the greatest pleasure in them, cannot in all points find them out. It is our duty to search the works of God, but to think we can find out the bottom of his works would be our sin.

Secondly, If the Almighty cannot be found out, no nor in his works of providence, then, *Take heed of censuring or finding fault with his works*. Shall we censure what we cannot know, and find fault with that which we cannot find? He that censures what another doth, should first have the full compass of what he doth, and be able to look quite thorow it, which the most eagle-eyed soul in the world cannot, as to what God doth in this world. And therefore though you see no reason for what is done, do not complain, for there may be a reason for the doing of it, which you do not see; and the reason is often such, and lyes so deep, that you cannot see it. And know this is reason enough, why you should forbear censuring what is done, because God doth it, though you can give no other reason why it is done.

Thirdly, *If God be past finding out in his works, and much more*

K k k k

in

in himself, then be not so much as discontented with his works. You are not yet come to the bottom, you have not seen the last man born (as we say) you know not what God will make of it, till he hath done all; therefore take heed of murmuring and discontent, (Zech. 2.13.) *Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord, for he is risen out of his holy habitation.* Though his rising be visible, yet we cannot see all the concernments and intendments of his rising; therefore be silent altogether from fear and discontents, and though not from all enquiries about it, yet from a presumption of finding out all by enquiries: For, *As touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out.* That's the first.

שני כח

He is excellent in power.

Ejus virtus
in infinitum
excedit omnes
eff. suos.
Aquin.

That's the second. Mr. Broughton reads, *He is huge of strength.* The word rendred *excellent*, properly signifies, *to encrease.* There is no encrease of the strength of God; what he is, he ever was, and ever will be; there is neither encrease nor diminution of his strength. But because things which are alwayes encreasing grow to a huge bigness and strength, therefore he is said to *encrease in strength*, or (as our translation imports) to *excel in power.* He that excels in power is excellent in power. The word rendred *power*, implieth the power of doing (the Greeks call it *δύναμις*) or, of activity, a power put forth in working; he is excellent in power, that is, in ability to do whatsoever he pleaseth; and when 'tis said *he is excellent in power*, in this kind of power, it notes, that the power of God in doing, doth wonderfully excel all that ever he hath done. The effects or acts of the power of God are nothing, as I may say, to the faculty of his Power; he can do more than he hath done: He is so far from having ever-acted himself, I mean from having done more than he can do again (which hath been the case of many mighty men, and may be the case of any man, how mighty a doer soever he is) that he can do infinitely more than he hath done, if he himself pleaseth; he is excellent in power, or of excelling power. I have (as was lately said) opened this point, of the power of God, in other places of this Book, whither I refer the Reader; yet taking the power of God (as the word is properly here intended) for his working power,

Note;

Note ;

The working power of God is excellent, ſo excellent that it exceeds the apprehenſion of man.

There is a two-fold power of God, and in both he is excellent.

First, His commanding power, his power of Sovereignty, or Authority ; that's a moſt excellent power, 'tis a power over all, whether things or perſons.

Secondly, His power of working or effecting that which he commands. Some have a power of commanding, yet want a power of working, they want a power to effect that which they command : but whatſoever God hath a mind to command, he hath an hand to effect and bring it about ; he can carry on his work through all the difficulties and deficiencies which it meets with in or by the creature ; He can do his work though there be none to help him in it, though all forſake him, and with-draw from his work ; yea, he often worketh though there be not ſo much as an Interceſſor to move him to work (*Iſa. 59. 16.*) He ſaw that there was no man (to do any thing) and wondered that there was no Interceſſor to entreat him to do ſomewhat for them. Things were in a great exigency, and there was not only no man that would put forth a hand, but there was no man that would beſtow a word for redreſs, no man would beſpeak either God or men for help: What then ? muſt the work ſtand ſtill or miſcarry ? no, ſaith the text, *His own arm brought ſalvation unto him*, that is, ſet it ready at hand for him to beſtow upon his people, or, his own arm brought that ſalvation to his people, which they greatly needed, and he graciously intended, though he had not the contribution of a word towards it from any creature here below, one or other. God alone is ſelf-ſufficient, and to man All-ſufficient. Such is the working power of God, that he can work, not only when he hath but a little help, but when he hath no help at all.

Secondly, The excellency of the working power of God appears in this, that he can and will produce the deſired effect, and bring his work to paſs, though many, though all men oppoſe it and riſe up againſt it, though they ſet both heart and hand, wit and will, power and policy, to croſs, yet to cruſh it. The Lord is ſo excellent in power, that he both can and will do his work through

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all opposition; though mountains stand in his way, though rocks stand in his way, he will remove them, or work through them. (*Isa. 43. 13.*) *I will work, and who shall lett it?* Neither strength nor craft, neither multitude nor magnitude, neither the many nor the mighty can lett it, if the Lord undertake it. Take a double Inference from this.

First, 'Tis matter of great comfort to all that fear God in their weakest condition and lowest reducements, when they are fatherless, and have none to help them. As the Lord is excellent in his working power, so he usually takes that time, yea staves that time, till his servants are under the greatest disadvantages, till they are at worst, before he will put forth his power and work. The Apostle saith of himself (*2 Cor. 12. 10.*) *When I am weak, then am I strong*, that is, then have I the strength of the Lord coming into my help. And as it is with respect to particular persons, so to the whole generation of his children, *when they are weak, then are they strong*, that is, then they have the strong God, the God excellent in power, appearing and working for them.

Secondly, This also is a sad word to all that stand in the way of Gods working power; His working power quickly works through all power, and can work it down. *Babylon* is a mighty powerful enemy, but (*Rev. 18. 8.*) we read of the downfall of *Babylon*, and that her ruine shall come as in one day: But, how shall this be effected? The answer is given in the close of the verse, *For strong is the Lord God which judgeth her*. Suppose there should be no power in the world strong enough to pull down *Babylon*, yea, suppose all the powers in the world should stand up for *Babylon*; 'tis otherwise prophesied, for, *the Kings of the earth shall hate the whore and shall make her desolate, and naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire*; but suppose, I say, all earthly power should appear for, rather than against *Babylon*, yet this is enough for us to rest in, *strong is the Lord which judgeth her. He is excellent in power*, and as it followeth,

In Judgment.

This comes in, lest any should think, because God is so excellent in power, so mighty in strength, that therefore he would carry things by violence or by meer force, as the sons of men, the mighty *Nimrods* of the world sometimes do: If they have strength and

and power to do such or such things, they regard not Judgment nor Justice, they look not whether right or wrong; therefore *Elihu*, when he had said, *God is excellent in power*, presently adds, *and in Judgment*. As if he had said, *Though the Lord excel all in power, and is able to crush the mightiest as a moth, yet he will not oppress any by his power; the worst of men shall find the Lord as much in judgment and righteousness, as he is in strength and power. And therefore, O Job, be assured, God hath not done thee any wrong, nor ever will.* This I conceive to be the scope of *Elihu* in the connexion of these two, The excellency of God in Judgment, as well as in Power.

But what are we to understand by judgment, in which *Elihu* saith God excels? In answer to this Querie I shall first shew that Judgment is taken four ways in Scripture, and then prove that God is excellent in Judgment, with respect to every one of them.

First, Judgment is an ability of judging. A man of judgment, and a wise man are the same. When we say, such a man, is a man of Judgment, or a judicious man, we mean, he is a prudent man, he is able to discern things that differ, he knows how to order, state and determine doubtful things aright. In this sense we are to understand it here, the Lord is excellent in judgment, that is, in wisdom and prudence to set things right, and to give every one his right, he sees clearly how to manage all his affaires and purposes by righteous means to right ends. The prophet gives God the glory of this title expressly (*Isa* 30.18.) *The Lord is a God of judgment: Blessed are they that wait for him.* That is, the Lord is infinitely furnished with wisdom, he knows exactly, not only what ought to be done, but how and when to do it; therefore waite for him. And 'tis encouragement to waite, when we have a person of judgment and understanding, a discreet and prudent person to waite upon. God is a God of judgment, in this sense, therefore blessed are they that waite for him.

Secondly, Judgement in Scripture is taken for that moderation, or due measure, which is observed in any thing that is done. This follows the former; for unless a man have a Judgment or true understanding in the thing it self, he can never hit a right measure of it. Thus, I conceive, that Scripture is to be understood (*Math* 23.23.) where Christ denouncing or thundering out woes thick and threefold against the proud hypocritical Pharisees,

sees, he tells them, *Ye pay tythe of Anise and Cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy; that is, either they did not give a right judgment according to Law, or their legal Judgments were given with rigour, not at all temper'd, mixt, and moderated with mercy. Of such the Apostle James speaketh (Chap. 2. 13.) He shall have judgment without mercy that hath shewed no mercy, and mercy rejoiceth against Judgment. In this sense the Lord is excellent in Judgment; For as he hath wisdom and understanding to see what is just & right, so in Judgment he remembers Mercy: His patience is great before he gives Judgment; and his moderation is great when he gives it. He dealeth not with us according to our sins, nor rewardeth us according to our iniquities, (Psal. 103. 10.) that is, his Judgments are not proportion'd to the greatness of our sins and iniquities; For (as it followeth at the 11th verse of that Psalm) as high as the Heaven is above the Earth, so great is his mercy towards them that feare him. Therefore the Prophet brings in the Church praying thus (Jer. 10. 24.) O Lord, Correct me (I conceive it is not a direct prayer for Correction, but a submission to it: As if he had said, I will not murmur, nor rebell against thy Correction; O Lord, Correct me) but with Judgment, that is, with due moderation: It cannot be meant of Judgment, as it notes the effect of divine displeasure, but Correct me moderately, or, as another text hath it, in measure, as thou usest to correct thy people. This meaning, is plain from the opposition in the next words, Not in thine anger, least thou bring me to nothing. Anger transports men to do things undecently & without moderation; we quickly exceed our limits, if carried out in passion; and though, that anger which the Scripture attributes often to God, never transports him beyond the due bounds of his wisdom and justice, yet when God is said to do a thing in anger, it notes his going, as it were, to the utmost bounds of justice; this caused the Church to pray, O Lord, if the cup may not pass from me, if it cannot be, but I must be corrected, then I humbly and earnestly beg, thou wouldst be pleased to correct me in Judgment, not in anger, least thou bring me to nothing. What the Church prayed for here, the Lord promised elsewhere (Jer. 30. 11.) I will not make a full end of thee, but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished. Thus God is excellent in Judgment: He abates the severity*

rity of his proceedings, and allayes the bitterness of the cup by some ingredients of mercy.

Thirdly, Judgment in Scripture is put for the reformation of things when they are out of order. In this sence it is used (*John* 12. 31.) *Now is the Judgment of this world.* Our late Annotators tell us, that by Judgment is meant reformation: As if Christ had said, *I am come to set all things in order, that have been out of order and disjointed in the Jewish Church, and every where else; Now is the Judgment of this world.* In this sence God is excellent in Judgment, or he excels in this Judgment, that is, he is for reformation, he will set all things right, he will make crooked things strait, he will make the rough places plain. *John* the Baptist came before Christ in this work, yet in this work Christ is before or exceeds *John* the Baptist. The Lord (*Isa.* 4. 4.) will purge away the iniquity of the daughter of Zion with a spirit of Judgment, and with a spirit of burning, that is, with a reforming and a refining Spirit: And the Lord will send forth this Judgment unto victory (*Matth.* 12. 20.) that is, he will do it thorowly, he will overcome all the difficulties, and put by all the obstacles which hinder the perfect reformation of things as well as of persons. That's the importance also of that great promise (*Isa.* 1. 25, 26.) I (saith the Lord) will turn my hand upon thee (or take thee in hand) and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tinn, (that is, all those corruptions which have crept in upon thee) & I will restore thy Judges as at the first, and thy Councillors as at the beginning. Things and persons are usually best at first. The new broom (say we) sweeps clean. As time consumes all things here below, so it corrupts most things; and therefore when the Lord promiseth to restore them to a primitive purity, he promiseth the purest restoration; all which is sum'd up in the 27th verse, *Sion shall be redeemed with Judgment*; which is not only, if at all, intended of a redemption by Judgment on her enemies, but by that reformation which God would work upon themselves, in taking away their dross and tinn, Restoring their Judges as at the first, and their Councillors as at the beginning. Such a Judgment is spoken of (*Isa.* 30. 22.) *Ye shall defile also* (that is, utterly disgrace and deface) *the Covering of thy graven Images of Silver, and the Ornaments of thy molten Images of Gold; thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth, thou shalt say unto it, get thee hence.* This is the Judgment of reformation, which
God

God hath and will further work among his people, till *Sion* be built up in perfect beauty, and *Jerusalem* become the praise of the whole earth. Thus also God is excellent both in power and in Judgment.

Fourthly, Judgment signifies those evils which God brings upon impenitent sinners; that's a very frequent notion of Judgment in Scripture, and the Lord is excellent in this Judgment; and that

First, Upon his own people, when they provoke him and sin against him (1 Pet. 4. 17.) *If Judgment begin at the house of God, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel.* There's Judgment beginning at the house of God, that is, God will bring evill upon his own house, the Church, even sore troubles and persecutions. The Lord will not spare them, who have been slight with him, forgetfull of him, formal in profession, or wanton and vaine in conversation. This is a great part of the Lords excellency in Judgment, he brings Judgment upon his own house. *The Lord*, saith the Prophet (Isa. 5. 16.) *shall be exalted in Judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness*, that is, in bringing his righteous Judgments upon *Israel*, his peculiar people. We find that Gospel Prophet *Isaiah* often interweaving the wyre and whipcord of corporal bondage, with the silk and scarlet thread of *Sions* deliverances.

Secondly, In Judgment towards his enemies (Psal. 149. 9.) *He will execute on them the Judgment that is written*, and that is no inconsiderable, nor easie Judgment. The servants of God may smart sorely under these Judgments, but the wicked and rebellious shall perish, and sink under them. How dreadfull is that profession or protestation which the Lord made by *Moses* (Deut. 32. 41.) *If I whet my glittering sword, and my hand take hold of Judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me.*

Some, possibly, may object, Surely there is no such appearance of Gods excellency in Judgment upon the wicked of the world, the enemies of his name and wayes. It grew to a Proverb (Mal. 2. 17.) *Ye say, every one that doth evill is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them, or where is the God of Judgment?* Evill men seem to be good in the eyes of the Lord when they enjoy good; and if it be so, (said some) *Where is the God of Judgment?*

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I answer, Firſt, the Lord hath left teſtimony enough upon Record, and written it in the blood of many thouſands, to juſtifie himſelf, that he is excellent in Judgment, by taking vengeance on the wicked. Did he not excell in Judgment upon the ſinning Angels? (2 Pet. 2. 8. Jude 6.) was he not excellent in Judgment, when he deſtroyed the whole world for ſin? when he burnt Sodom and Gomorrah with fire for ſin? How many inſtances might I give of this from Scripture? God hath ſufficiently declared himſelf excellent in this punitive Judgment.

I answer, Secondly, God indeed doth not preſently execute Judgment upon all the wicked; we ſhould rather be led by ſence than by reaſon, if he ſhould do ſo, if he ſhould ſmite ſinners as ſoon as they provoke him; yea, if God ſhould take that courſe, he muſt even break the world to peices, and deſtroy whole generations at once.

Thirdly, God ſuffers ſinners a while, that his counſels may be fulfilled; for though the wicked obey not the command of God, yet they fulfill the counſel of God (Acts 4. 28.) and they do it chiefly when he with-holdeth Judgment from them.

Fourthly, Unleſs the Lord did a little give ſtop to the execution of Judgment in this kind, it would neither appear how good, nor how bad ſome men are. Let ſome have but a little power in their hands, and the world at will, then you ſhall ſee whither they will go, and what they will do. And when bad men are ſuffered to go on unpunished, and to be a puniſhment to others, then it appears more fully how good ſome are, and that in a twofold reſpect. Firſt, becauſe they reſtraine from evill, though they ſee that they alſo poſſibly might do it (*impune*) and not ſuffer in this world. Secondly, becauſe they hold faſt both their profeſſion and praſtiſe of Godlineſs, how much ſoever they ſuffer for it in this world from evill men.

Fifthly, God is executing Judgments upon wicked men, while he ſeems to ſpare them from judgment (Pro. 1. 32.) *The proſperity of fools ſlayeth them.* Some think a wicked man is mightily favoured when he is in proſperity, no, that proſperity is his deſtruction, and deſtruction is Judgment in perfection. The table of a wicked man is made his ſnare, his full table fattens his heart, which is the foreſt of all judgments. To be unſenſible is worſe than any puniſhment of ſenſe; to be hardened or heartned in doing
 L I I I evil,

evill, is more penall than the suffering of any evill. Now while wicked men escape the suffering of evill, they grow resolved, that is, hardened and heartned in doing it, or to do it. Take *Solomons* observation or experience in the case (*Eccles. 8. 11.*) *Because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed* (upon themselves or others) *therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do mischief.* So then, there are many invisible judgments upon wicked men, when we see no hand touch them, nor judgment near them; God gives them up to vile affections, and to a reprobate mind (*Rom. 1. 26, 28.*) to their own counsels (*Psal. 81. 12.*) and to strong delusions by others (*2 Thes. 2. 11.*) These heavy loads of judgment may be on their hearts, upon whose backs we see not so much as a graine weight of judgment. Thus the Lord is excellent in judgment in all the notions of it; I have instanced feare.

Now, lest any should think that God at any time breaks the rule of justice in his zeale for this latter sort of judgment, or while he is powring out vengeance upon the wicked, therefore it follows in the next place,

ורב צדקה

And in plenty of Justice.

*Justitia est
constans &
perpetua vo-
luntas suum
cuiq; tribuen-
di. Justin:*

God executes great wrath upon sinners, but there is great Justice, plenty of Justice in it. There is store and abundance of justice and righteousness in his most rigorous judgments. A little justice is a most precious thing; how precious then is plenty of justice! *Justice in it self is the giving of every one his due;* and where justice is in any man, it constantly bends and enclines his heart to do so, his especially with whom there is (as in God) plenty of justice. And indeed, what-ever God hath, he hath plenty of it; He hath mercy, and plenty of it, he is *plenteous in mercy* (*Psal. 103. 8.*) *And with him is plenteous redemption,* (*Psal. 130. 7.*) There is also plenty of justice in him.

Some men have no Justice at all in them; though their office and place be to do Justice, yet they have nothing of justice, no tincture of it in them; *They neither feare God nor regard man,* to do him any justice. as the unjust Judge is described (*Luk. 18. 2.*) and with most Justice is a very scarce Commodity, they have but a very little of it, and they distribute it very poorly and sparingly. Where almost is the man to be found that hath plenty of justice

in himself, and distributes it plentifully to others? There was surely a great scarcity of Justice in the Justicers of Jerusalem, when the Lord by his Prophet (*Jer. 5. 1.*) offered to pardon the whole City, if upon the sending forth of his Writ of Enquiry, the name of any one man could be returned that executed Judgment. O that Dearth of Justice! and in what place may we hope to find plenty of justice among men, when so little of it was to be found in Jerusalem, the City of God? yet this may comfort us, that though there be little of it in or among men, there is plenty of it in God. And that there is plenty of justice in God, I would demonstrate these five wayes.

First, He hath plenty of justice, who deals justly with every man. God giveth every man his due, all his due, and nothing but his due. More distinctly, take this in two branches. First, he that rewards all that are good, with good, not this or that man, not his kinsman, or his friend only, but every man that is good, with good, he hath plenty of Justice: Thus doth God. The respect which God hath to the persons of good men, is like the respect which good men have to the commands of God, it is *universall*, he respects them all. As they give him plentiful obedience, having a respect to all his Commandements, so he gives them plentiful Justice, he hath respect to all their persons, to all their workings, to all their wayes, which are holy, just, and good. Again, Secondly, He hath plenty of Justice, who punisheth all that do evil, not winking at, nor sparing friends or kindred. Surely then there is plenty of justice in God; for as he rewards all the good with good, so he rewards all evil men with evil; that's all the reward they shall have, and they shall have plenty of it (*Psal. 31. 23.*) He plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. The proud shall have and drink up the last, the residue, the remainder, the very dregs of the bitter cup, of the cup of trembling, as the Hebrew elegancy used by the Psalmist intimates. *Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil; for there is no respect of persons with God,* (*Rom. 2. 9, 11.*) As he will punish none but evil-doers, so he will punish them every one, except they repent.

Secondly, With the Lord is plenty of Justice, for he knows the whole Compass of Justice, he hath the clear Idea of it in his understanding, he knows all the rules of it, or rather is the rule of it. All the rules of Justice came out from him, and are but the

signification of his own mind, therefore he must needs know them, and be well skilled in them. Some men have a good mind to do justice, yet have no plenty of it, because they are unskillfull in the rule of it, the Lawes both of God and man. A Judge that is blind through ignorance, and hath not a gift of knowledge and understanding in the Law, taulters in doing, or is unfit to do Justice, as much as he that is blinded with gifts, or byas'd by relations and private passions; he that is blind the former way cannot have, and he that is blinded by any of the latter wayes will never do *plenty of Justice*. But as the Lord hath an infinitely clear eye as to the rule, so no gift can blind him, nor can any relation put out his eyes from seeing a fault, nor divert him from punishing it (*Isa. 27. 11.*) *It is a people of no understanding* (either to do good, or to depart from evil) *therefore he that made them* (that's a neer relation) *will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them* (that's the same) *will shew them no favour*. As if the Lord had said, *Justice shall be done, though the work of my own hands be undone by it*; There's plenty of justice. And as God knows the rule of the Law perfectly, and will not be turned aside from it; so he knows the matter of fact perfectly, and cannot be mislead about that; Upon which mistake some, who have great knowledge of the rule of the Law, yet do not plenty of justice: they often condemn the innocent, and acquit the nocent, because they find not out the truth of their cause, but are misinform'd about it. But, *the Lord is a God of knowledg, by his actions are weighed*; he knows not only the matter of Law, but the matter of fact too, and therefore with him *there is plenty of Justice*.

Thirdly, There must needs be plenty of Justice with God, because he knows the spirit and heart with which every man acts, he knoweth whether a thing be done maliciously, or meerly by a surprize of passion (Justice is guided much by that consideration in some cases) The Lord knows the heart, wherewith every thing is done, and the design or ayne of every man in doing it. As he will make manifest the Counsels of the heart, at last to all, so now the Counsels of the heart are manifest to him; therefore he must needs be plentiful in justice.

Fourthly, God is clothed with sufficient power to execute justice, therefore with him there is plenty of it. Some have a good mind to do justice, they know the Law & the fact too, yet are shortned

shortned and strained in doing justice, because they have not power, or are not able to carry it out against potent offenders, but are forced to forbear the doing of justice, because at present they cannot. The doing of justice requireth strength of hand, as well as strength of Law, and integrity of heart. *David* had a good mind to do justice upon *Joab* (though nearly related to him) when he had, under a pretence of friendship, slain *Abner*; but he saw himself under a necessity of forbearance at that time, and therefore said, *I am this day weak* (though anointed King) *and these sons of Zerviah be too hard for me.* But there are no sons of *Zerviah* too hard for the Lord, he can call them to an account at any time: *David* knew that very well, and therefore he referred *Joab* to Gods Justice in the close of that verse (2 Sam. 2. 39.) *The Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness. Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the dayes that I shall deal with thee?* saith the Lord by his Prophet (*Ezek. 22. 14.*) They cannot, therefore *with him is plenty of Justice.*

Fifthly, The Lord cannot but have plenty of justice, for his very nature is justice. Man doth that readily and plentifully which he doth naturally; it is as impossible for God not to do justice, as it is for him not to be. A man may be unjust, and yet be a man, but God cannot be God, and not do justly. Seeing then it is his nature to do justice, there must needs be plenty of justice with him: And how severe soever the judgments of God are, there is nothing but justice in them. *Justice, Justice, shalt thou follow,* was the command of God to the Judges of *Israel* by *Moses*, that is, as we translate, *that which is altogether just shalt thou follow* (*Deut. 16. 20.*) As that promise of peace, *peace*, notes plenty of peace (*Isa. 26. 2.*) so this command of doing *Justice, Justice*, notes plenty of Justice. Certainly then the Lord himself will do justice plentifully. *Justice, Justice* will he do. Take two Inferences from this assertion.

First, This truth is matter of comfort to, and sweetly smiles upon the just, that the Lord hath plenty of justice in him; for then, doubtless, he will performe all his good words of promise to them. 'Tis the part of a just man to performe his word; God is faithfull to his word, what-ever men are. It hath been said, *If you would know what some men mean never to do, then look to their promises.*

*Eorum quæ
appetebat ut
qui quam præ
se ferebat, &
eorum quæ di-
cebat ne quic-
quam facere
volebat. Sui-
das de Tibe-
rio.*

promises. It was a very dishonorable Character which *Suidas* gave of the *Romane* Emperour *Tiberius*; He never made shew of having what he desired, or had a mind to, nor ever minded to do what he had promised. But God, the great God, is so true and just to his word or promise, that his people may take strong consolation from every word of promise. (*Tit. 1. 2.*) In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promised. No man could ever challenge God of any failure in promise. There are four things ascribed to God in Scripture, which may assure us that he will be just in performing all his promises. First, He remembers them all (*Psal. 111. 5. Psal. 115. 12.*) Secondly, He is unchangeable and in one mind, (*Job 23. 13, 14.*) Thirdly, He is the Almighty, and ever furnished with power to perform them. Fourthly, He is most faithfull, and will not deny nor falsifie them (*Heb. 10. 23.*)

Secondly, This truth hath a most dreadfull aspect and frownes terribly upon the ungodly and unjust. That God hath plenty of Justice, Justice enough to bestow among them all, is enough to confound them all; though they make a Covenant with death, and with hell are at agreement, yet their Covenant and agreement shall be dissolved, (*Isa. 28. 15, 16.*) The Scripture speaks Justice often to sinners, specially to those unjust ones, who weigh the violence of their hands (*Psal. 58. 1, 2.*) that is, who oppress with a kind of exactness, who do not tumble it out palpably, or in a lump, but weigh it out, now a little, and then a little: The Lord knoweth how to deal with such cunning perverters of Justice, and will at last make them acknowledge, both that themselves had no justice in them, and that himself hath plenty of it. And who now, laying these five considerations together, will not acknowledge, that the Lord hath plenty of justice? But the inference which *Elihu* makes from it in the close of the verse, seems, if not a kind of denial, yet a great abatement of it, for having said, *He is excellent in plenty of Justice*, the next words are,

He will not afflict.

This may seem at first hearing, a strange connection; will he not afflict? how then hath he plenty of Justice? Doth not God afflict? who afflicts then? have men the power of affliction in their hands? or hath Satan the power of affliction in his hand? *Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground*, said *Eliphaz* (*Chap. 5. 6.*)

Saith

Saith not the Scripture every where, affliction comes down from heaven, or that 'tis of God? did not *Job* say (*Chap. 1. 21.*) *The Lord hath taken, that is, afflicted me, by taking away my all of this world?* and doth not God himself say (*Psal. 89. 30, 31, 32.*) *If his children forget my Law, I will punish their transgression with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes?* How then saith *Elihu*, *God will not afflict?*

I answer, First, In general, *Elihu* speaks thus in answer to a doubt, or to remove a feare arising upon the whole, of what had been said of God. For if God be such a God, so excellent in power, and in Judgment, and in plenty of Justice, then surely our case is very sad, may some say, who can abide to be neere or stand before such a God? O, saith *Elihu*, feare not, *He will not afflict.* More particularly, I answer,

First, Though God be excellent in Judgment, and plenty of Justice, yet it may be said, *he will not afflict*, because in some sense, he hath not a will to afflict, or he doth not afflict with his will, that is, he delights not to afflict, he hath declared himself more ready to shew mercy, than to execute judgment. In one Prophet he saith, *I have no pleasure in the death of him that dyeth* (*Ezek. 18. 32.*) and another Prophet saith of him, *He doth not willingly afflict, nor grieve the children of men* (*Lam. 3. 33.*) This Prophet was there bemoaning the greatest affliction that ever befell the people of God, yet, saith he, *God doth not afflict willingly*, he doth not afflict with his heart, as the word there is expressed in the Margin; when he afflicts, it is as it were a work of his hand, not of his heart, yea a work that he would gladly rid his hands of. What once that cruel Tyrant *Nero* said when he was to signe a Warrant for the Execution of an offender, *How glad should I be if I could not write my name!* (This spake he, possibly, when his heart was as full of blood as it could hold) yet thus he spake to signifie a great unwillingness to afflict. This is most true of the great God; though he be a God of excellent power and judgement, and plenty of justice, yet he doth not afflict willingly; he could be glad, that he might never have an occasion to afflict, that he might never be provoked to draw his sword, no, nor so much as to use his rod in this world.

Secondly, It may be said, *God will not afflict*, because he never afflicteth without a just cause; his unlimited power never

Ex corde. Heb. ex animo libens. Vatable

O Quid vellem nescire literas!

temptis

tempts him, nor doth any passion transport him to a desire of taking undue revenge upon any; he hath plenty of Justice, and therefore cannot afflict, but when he sees great reason for it. Did not our sin call for our affliction, were there not some great provocation on our part, or some profit to come to us by it, we should never hear of, nor feel his rod. The Apostle saith (*Heb. 12. 9, 10.*) *We have had Fathers of our flesh, who for a few dayes chastened us after their own pleasure, they to ease themselves, have put us to pain, but the Lord doth it for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.* There is just cause we should be afflicted, when we provoke God by sin, or when he would purge us from our sin, or make us more holy. And as it may be said, *God will not afflict*, because he doth not afflict us but when there is cause for it, so

Thirdly, Because he doth not afflict us but when there is need (*1 Pet. 1. 6.*) nor more *than there is need*; we shall not be afflicted an hour longer, nor have a grain more of weight in the burden of our cross, nor a drop more of gall and wormwood in the cup of our sorrows than we have need of (*Isa. 27. 7, 8, 9.*) *Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him? in measure, when it shooteth forth thou wilt debate with him.* As if it had been said, he shall have no greater a measure than is both useful and needful; First, to humble him for his sin; secondly, to subdue and mortifie his sin; thirdly, he shall have no more than is needful to exercise his graces, his faith and patience; no more, fourthly, than is needful to make him thankful for deliverance, and sensible of mercy when it comes. Thus, as God, who hath plenty of Justice, will not afflict us, but when there is need, so not more than is need.

Fourthly, It may be said, He will not afflict, because he doth not afflict us more than we can bear; he tenderly considers our strength, what we are able to stand under, & how long we are able to stand under it; he will not break our backs nor our hearts (unless by godly sorrow for, or from sin) by affliction. God (saith the Apostle *1 Cor. 10. 13.*) *is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.* Hence when it is said (*Lam. 3. 23.*) *He doth not afflict willingly, &c.* it followeth (*vers. 34.*) *to crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth.* The Lord makes
many

many his prisoners, yet then his bowels are opened towards them, he will not crush, nor tread them down, as mire in the streets. *I* (saith the Lord, *Iſa.* 57. 16.) *will not contend for ever, &c.* For (if I should) *the Spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.* I know what your spirits can bear, and I will contend no longer than I know you are able to bear it. Hence that Promise (*Pſal.* 125. 3.) *The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous, lest he put forth his hands to evil.* The Lord knows the rod may prevail over us so, as to put us upon the doing of evil, and therefore he will take order that it shall not.

Thus we may safely understand this assertion, *He will not afflict*, that is, he afflicts not willingly; he afflicts not till there is need, nor will he afflict more than needs, nor more than we are able, or himself will enable us to bear; he will either support us under, or give us deliverance out of all our afflictions in due time.

I might hence, or from the whole, infer a double duty.

First, Be Patient under affliction.

Secondly, Be Comforted in affliction.

For God doth so afflict, that he may be truly said not to afflict, But having met with occasions for the ministering of such like counsels to the afflicted, from other passages in this book, it may suffice only to mind the Reader of them here.

This spake *Elihu* in the close or peroration of his discourse, to stir up *Job* to consider all the dealings of God with him; he would have him sit down with these four Doctrinal Conclusions upon his heart, that God is *Excellent in Power, and in Judgement, and in plenty of Justice, he will not afflict.* Surely he will not afflict more in measure, nor longer in time than is need, as *Job* seemed in his passion, to intimate and charge God, for which he had several reproofs before.

Thus far I have opened these words, as they stand in our translation. There are two or three different readings, especially of the latter part of the verse, which would not be altogether omitted, and therefore I shall touch at them, and then proceed to the next and last verse of this Chapter, which is also *Elihu's* parting word, or the conclusion of his large and close discourse with *Job*.

The first different reading is much insisted upon by some Interpreters.

M m m m

Omnipotens
quem non affe-
quimur amplius
est vultus, sed
iudicio & mag-
nitudine justi-
tie non affli-
get. Merc.

Quamvis sit
potentissimus
tamen homines
ante creatos
tanti facit ut
non utatur om-
nipotentia sua
ad eos summo
iure & pro me-
ritis eorum affli-
gendos. Jun.

terpreters. Take it thus; *The Almighty, whom we cannot find out, is great in power, but he will not afflict in judgment and plenty of justice.* This translation transposeth those words, which we place in the end of the verse, *he will not afflict*, to the middle of it, and it renders the copulative particle *And*, by the adversative *But*: This makes the sence of the whole verse more plain and easie than the former, as also to rise up more fully to the purpose of *Elihu*. As if he had thus summed up all that he spoke before, or had contracted it into this sum.

Which things, seeing they are so, as I have declared, we may certainly conclude, that the Almighty is so full of majesty and power, that we are no way able to reach, compass and find him out: Yet notwithstanding he is so full of goodnesse and mercy, that he is very sparing towards men, and will not afflict them according to their demerits, nor up to the extremity of justice. This exposition holds out clearly that temperament of the power and justice, with the goodness and mercy of God, which *Elihu* undertook to demonstrate, at the fifth verse of the thirty sixth Chapter, and so forwards; *He is great in power, but he will not afflict in judgement.*

Take this note from it;

How great soever the power of God is, yet he doth not afflict sinful man according to the greatness of his power, nor the utmost line of his justice.

The Lord is full of mercy, full of sparing mercy, he spareth his people, *as a man spareth his own son that serveth him* (*Mal. 3. 17.*) And indeed if God should afflict in plenty, that is, in extremity of justice, what would become of the best, of the holiest of men? Who can withstand the power of the great God? who can stand in judgment before him, *if he should mark iniquities?* (*Psal. 130. 3.*) *Woe to the most innocent man alive, if God should mark iniquities, and not forgive iniquities.* And therefore it follows in the next or 4th verse of that Psalm, *But with thee is forgiveness.* As God is most bountiful in giving, so is he most merciful in forgiving. This holds the head of believing and repenting sinners above water, and keeps them from sinking into the bottomless gulfe of despaire, that they have a forgiving God to go unto, and that there is none like him in forgiving (*Mich.*

(Mich. 7. 18.) None forgiving so freely (Isa. 42. 25.) so abundantly (Isa. 55. 7.) none so constantly and continually as he. There is forgiveness with thee; 'tis a continued a perpetual act. Now because God pardons so freely, he doth not, he will not, he cannot because he will not, punish extremely. God dealeth with sinners in measure, because he dealeth with them in a Mediator. Though he be great in power, yet he will not afflict according to the greatness of his power or the plenty of his justice.

Secondly, Some of the Jewish Doctors render the latter part of the verse thus; whereas we say, *He is excellent in judgement, and in plenty of justice, he will not afflict*, they say, *He will not afflict judgement and plenty of justice*; that is, as they give the gloss, *Though he be great in power, yet he will not pervert justice*. We may well say justice is afflicted, when it is perverted; and then justice is perverted, when any man is wronged, or when at any time the wronged, or wrongfully afflicted, are not righted and relieved. Thus God will not afflict justice. These translators do not joyn the word *afflict* (as we) to the person of man, but to the *justice* of God, or the actings of his justice. He is great in power, but he will not afflict, he will not oppress judgement and justice. This is doubtless a great truth in itself, yet I doubt whether it be the truth intended by *Elihu* in this place. Certainly, God will not do any man wrong, though he hath power enough, all power in his hand, yea, God will do all men right; though he be great in power, yet what affliction soever he layeth upon the creature shall be no affliction to justice or judgement, to that justice or judgement with which God is clothed, and will declare by executing it among the children of men. But I pass this as over-nice.

Thirdly, Others render thus, *He is excellent in power, and in judgement, and plenty in justice, he will not answer*. The word which we translate, *to afflict*, with some alteration in the Hebrew pointing, signifieth also *to answer*; and so the words carry a sense of the absolute sovereignty of God, who is so great in power, and in judgement, and plenty of justice, that he will not answer; that is, though men complain of his justice, or think he hath done them wrong, or at least is over-severe towards them, yet he will not come to an answer, he will give no man a reason of his wayes. Of this *Elihu* spake expressly (Chap. 33. v. 13.) *He giveth not an ac-*

M m m m 2

count

Judicium & copiam justitie non affliget. i. e. jus non pervertet Merc. ex Rabbinis.

Non respondebit. Tygur. Probavimus si affliget הושיע in fonte nunc eum sit הושיע non potest aliter legi, quam affliget, vexat. Druf. Merc.

count of any of his matters. God is so powerful that no man can call him to an account, and so just in the use or exercise of his power, that there is no reason why any should. But though this also be a great truth, yet because *Elihu* had asserted it fully before, as also because this translation is grounded upon a change in the ordinary pointing of the Hebrew word, from which I conceive, with others, we ought not easily to recede, therefore I shall not stay upon it.

Not shall I more than mention that apprehension of some Rabbins, who thus give out a 4th sence or interpretation of the words; whereas we say, *As touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out, he is excellent in power, and in judgement, &c.* They say thus, although the Almighty be great in power and in judgement, and plenty of justice, yet we find him not so; That is, we do not find him putting out the greatness of his power, or the exactness of his justice, in the commands wch he hath laid upon us, or in the duties wch he hath required of us; he doth not over-burthen us, nor exact hard things of us. And they instance in the rules which God gave about offerings and sacrifices; he required (say they) of some only a turtle dove, or a pair of young pigeons, of others but a lamb, or a bullock, such things he required for sacrifice as were of easie price, and might easily be obtained, he did not put us upon the getting of strange and rare beasts, as Buffes, or Unicorns, or any sort of creature which may put us to much paines in getting them, or to much expence in buying them. And as in these, so in other things God hath graciously condescended to our weakness, as appears every where in the Law. Thus the Jewish Writers make out their translation: and though it be a truth, that in one sence the Ceremonial Law was (as *St Peter*, in that council at *Jerusalem* declared *Acts 15. 10*) *A Yoke, which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear*, yet there was much favour mixed with it, which caused the Lord to appeale in that point to their own consciences, or to make themselves the Judges (*Mch. 6. 3.*) *O my people, what have I done unto thee, or wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me.* And as God, though great in power, did not over-lay the Jews, so much less hath he over-laid us Christians with duty (*1 Job. 5. 3*) *His Commandements are not grievous.* And Christ said of his yoke and burden (*Mat. 11. 10.*) *My yoke is easie, and my burden is light.* Christ may lay what burdens he pleaseth upon us, but he is not pleased to lay any grievous burdens upon us. This therefore is a

truth

*Omnipotentem
non invenimus
multum robore
& judicio; Et
tali sit, tamen
talem eum non
experimur in
mandatis suis,
ut immodice
nos oneret, aut
immodicam a
nobis exigeret
justitiam, &c.
Rabbi Sele.
moth & Ram-
bam.*

truth, both as to them and us, yet I conceive it beside the design of *Elihu* in this place, and I only mind the Reader of these different interpretations, of all which some good improvement may be made. So much of this verse : The whole discourse of *Elihu* concludes in the next.

Verf. 24. *Men do therefore fear him : He respecteth not any that are wise in heart.*

This verse containeth two things.

First, a practical inference, by way of use, from that fourfold doctrine held forth in the former verse, concerning God. As if *Elihu* had said, *For as much as the Almighty is incomprehensible, so that we cannot find him out ; for as much as he is mighty in power, and judgement, and plenty of justice, so that we can neither avoid him nor delude him, therefore men do fear him.*

Secondly, We have an enforcement of this Inference, by a cogent reason, *For he respecteth not any that are wise in heart.* Who these wise-hearted ones are, whom God respecteth not, will appear in the opening those words,

Men do therefore fear him.

The word rendred *Men*, properly signifieth, *weak or feeble men*, as also men in affliction, men under the afflicting hand, or rod of God. This strict acception of the word, renders the opposition more cleare, setting the lowest of humane frailty, against the highest divine power. Yet we need not stand strictly upon the Grammatical signification of the word, but may take men, in all their divisions and formes ; men, be they high or low, afflicted or in prosperity, ought therefore to fear him.

UIN
Vir miser &
imbecillus.

Only, it may seem most sutable, in way of application, to *Job*, for *Elihu* to use this word in that restrained sence ; *Afflicted feeble men do fear him*, As if he had said. *O Job, thou art a weak man, a man greatly afflicted, thou hast been long under the rod and chastening hand of God, therefore thou oughtest to fear him, and not expostulate the matter with him, as thou hast done. Men do*

Therefore fear him.

This illative, *Therefore*, hath reference (as was intimated) to all that was said in the former verse, yet we may take it specially in these

these two particulars. *Therefore men do fear him*; Why?

First, Because he is so great, so immense, so incomprehensible, so powerful, so just, because he hath such plenty of justice, *therefore men do fear him*.

Secondly, *Therefore men do fear him*; Why? Because, though he be clothed with power, justice and judgement, yet *he will not afflict*, that is, he will not afflict extremely, in any of those four senses before given; he moderates his power by compassion in his sharpest dispensations towards his people; there is a great mixture of love & mercy with his justice, therefore men do fear him. As if *Elihu* had thus bespoken *Job*; Others fear God because they experience or find him kind and good to them, even in affliction, how then cometh it to pass, that thou hast from the beginning carried it, as if God mixt no kindness nor shewed any tenderness in his afflicting of thee? why is it that thou hast cursed thy day? that thou hast complained that ever thou wast born, that thou hast so often wished for death? Why hast thou said that thou art not only pressed, but even oppressed, that though thy cause be good, yet thou hast born the heaviest loads of evil? Why dost thou strive with him? These are no arguments of thy fear, but of an impatient and fretful spirit, if not of a kind of rage and fury against God himself; These are no proofs that thou dost acknowledge his goodness in afflicting thee, and so fear him, for by these thou dost rather charge and accuse him of harshness and severity.

Now though it may be said (as it hath often in the opening this Book) that *Job* spake such words partly in the heat of his passion, partly through the greatness of his pain, partly through the infirmity of his flesh, as also being much moved and provoked by the grievous censures of his friends: yet notwithstanding all this, his words were such as neither could, nor ought to be wholly excused; so that *Elihu* might say, *Men do therefore fear him*. But, O *Job*, thou hast carried it, as if thou didst not fear him, thou hast not behaved thy self like other men, under the same, or a like afflicting hand of God. For though *Job* is to be reckoned among men that feared God, yea, in the highest form of those that feared him, yet he failed much in his affliction, as to the expression of this holy fear.

Thus we have that two-fold reference, in which *Elihu* saith, *Therefore do men fear him*.

First,

First, Because of his great power.

Secondly, Because of that great tendernesse which he useth in the exercise of his power: Which yet Job did scarce acknowledge, as appeared by his complainings and murmurings about the dealings of God.

Men do therefore fear him, so we render, yet 'tis considerable, that the Hebrew runs in the future time, *Men will therefore fear him*, that is, *men should therefore fear him*, or men therefore ought to fear him. Words in the Hebrew of a future signification, bear the importance of a present duty; what good 'tis said men will do, is as if it had been said, they do, or ought to do. And as to the duty here spoken of, the fear of God, we may make this conclusion, *All good men do fear God upon these accounts, and all men should, or ought to fear him*. The thing is to be done, whether men do it or no. Where an expresse command is given, every man concerned is bound to obey; and where, or who is the man that is not concern'd in this command, *fear the great and gracious God? Men do therefore*

Fear him.

What it is to fear God, was shewed largely at the 28th Chapter of this Book and the last Verse, therefore I shall not stay upon it here: Only remember the word signifieth, a gracious, a child-like fear, not a servile slavish fear. There are two words, by which the fear of God is expressed in the Latine tongue, which we may expresse thus, *to fear God*, or, *to be afraid of God*. Good men fear God, but wicked men are afraid of God. Now though the word are often used promiscuously, and to fear, is sometimes taken in the worse, sometimes in the better sence, yet, here we are to take it in the best sence, *Therefore do men fear him*, that is, they ought to stand in awe and not sin against him, they should submit to, not dispute his dealings. The fear of God, in the general notion of it, is nothing else, but Piety and Religion; or the whole worship of God. To say a man is godly or religious, is all one as to say, he is a man fearing God. Now, whereas usually a general rule is urged to lead in a general practise, here a general practise is urged as leading to a general rule. *Men do therefore fear him.*

Whence

Ideo timebunt eum homines. Mont. Verbum futuri temporis solet denotare id quod debet, quod expedit fieri, quare timebunt idem erit, quod timere debent, timere jubentur. Deum revereri. Deum timere. Proprie reveretur Deum pius, timet superstitiosus. Tamen hanc differentiam interpretes non observant; nam passim timere usurpant pro revereri. Drus.

Whence we may take this general Observation ;

It is the duty of all men, of every man, to fear God.

Men, one or other, ought to have high and honourable thoughts of God, they ought to have holy and reverentiall thoughts of God, they ought to put far away from them all slightrness, and vanity of spirit, when they think or speak of God, they ought to put far from them all boldness and presumption, when they have to do with God. To put away all slight and bold thoughts of God, to take up high and reverentiall thoughts of God, this, this is to fear God.

Yet a little further, and more distinctly, I conceive here in this place, to fear God, stands in a four-fold opposition.

First, Men should fear him, and not murmur at what he doth.

Secondly, They should fear him, and not lightly pass by what he doth.

Thirdly, They should fear him, and not question him about what he doth.

Fourthly, They should fear him, and not curiously search or pry into what he doth.

The Lord having such power to do, such wisdom in doing, such a mixture of mercy with justice in all that he doth, men should only admire and improve his doings, not murmur at, nor lightly pass by, nor question, nor curiously pry into what he doth. Thus to fear God as faithful in all his works, and to fear offending him in any of our own works, is the summe of Godliness. *Hear the conclusion of all (saith Solomon Eccl. 12. 13.) Fear God, and keep his Commandments: this is the whole of man, that is (as we translate) the whole duty of man.*

Secondly, Taking the word *men* more strictly, as signifying, not strong, or mighty men, but weak, afflicted men ;

Note ;

When God is afflicting us, we ought to be much in the fear of God.

What ? when the hand of God is upon us, shall our hearts be lifted up against him ? or in our selves ? what ! shall not our hearts stoop when our backs are burdened with sorrows, and bowed down

down with a cross? Not to fear God when we are at furthest remove from fear, or trouble in the world, is an argument of a very bad heart; but not to fear him when fear is round about us, or, when himself is chastening and correcting of us, argueth a much worse frame of heart. Holy *David* gave this character of his enemies (*Psal. 55. 19.*) *Because they have no charges, therefore they fear not God.* What shall we say of them who fear not God though they have many changes? such changes, I mean, as *Job* felt, and cryed out of in the bitterness of his soul (*Chap. 10. 17.*) *Changes and war are against me*: And 'tis conceived, that *Elihu* aimed particularly at *Job* in this passage, as if he were the man, who, though under great changes, and in great troubles, yet behaved himself unlike those who truly fear the Lord.

Thirdly, Note;

It is so much the duty of man to fear God, that it may well be supposed of all men, that they fear him.

He can scarce be looked upon as a man, who doth not fear God. Doth he know himself to be a weak man, who doth not tremble at the remembrance of the Almighty God? Doth he know himself to be a sinful man who doth not tremble at the remembrance of the holy, of the most holy God? This duty of fear is due to God upon so many accounts (even common accounts) from man, that we may conclude, surely, every man feareth God. Shall we not fear him who is incomprehensibly great in power and in judgment, and in plenty of justice? What! not fear him who made us, and preserveth us, who feeds and cloaths us? What! nor fear him in whose hand our breath is, and all our wayes? These, and many more, are common accounts, upon which all men may see both reason and their own engagement to fear God. So then, as because it is so much the duty of a Son to honour his Father, and of a Servant to fear his Master, therefore the Scripture supposeth all Sons and Servants doing it (*Mal. 1. 6.*) *A Son honoureth his Father, and a Servant his Master.* He doth not say, a Son ought to honour his Father, and a Servant his Master; but, *he honoureth, or doth honour.* That person deserveth not the name of a Son that doth not honour his Father, nor is he worthy the name of a Servant that doth not honour his Master. Now, I say, as the Scripture takes it for granted, upon this ground, the naturalness

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of the duty, that every Son honours his Father, and every Servant his Master, so it doth, and so may we, that every man feareth God. And doubtless, if a Son or Servant deserves not to bear the name of these relations, unless they honour and fear Father and Master, how much less do they deserve to be called Men, who do not fear God, the Almighty God!

Again, from those two particular heads, upon which this fear is grounded; First, *Therefore*, with respect to the power and justice of God; Secondly, *Therefore*, with respect to the mercy and tenderness of God,

Note, First;

God is to be feared because he is so full of power and justice, then especially, when by some eminent and special act of providence, he declares his power, and is doing justice.

By how much the more God puts himself forth in his power and justice, by so much the more he is to be feared. 'Tis prophesied (Rev. 15. 3.) that when God shall shew forth his great power, and execute the severity of his justice upon Antichrist, then, *they who shall get the victory over the beast, and over his image, &c. shall sing the Song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways thou King of Saints. What followeth? Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy Name?* The vengeance to be poured upon Babylon will be so great a demonstration of Gods power and justice, that it will give occasion to all men, the faithful especially, yea, it will call upon them aloud to fear God: *Who shall not fear thee?* As if he had said, surely there is no man so stupid, so stout-hearted, or so hard-hearted, but if he see God in, or at this work, he will have dreadful apprehensions of him, and fear before him. Yet this is not spoken of such a fear as Christ hath fore-told shall seize upon and possess the hearts of men before his glorious appearing (Luke 21. 25, 26.) *There shall be signes in the Sun, and in the Moon, and in the Stars, and upon the Earth, distresses of Nations with perplexity, the Sea and the Waters roaring, mens hearts failing them for fear, &c.* It shall not be (I say) such a fear, a heart-failing, but a heart-enlarging fear; not such a fear as they have, or rather, as
hath

hath them, who have their hope only in this life (these shall fear with an amazing, desponding, despairing fear), but such a fear as they have, who, through grace, have risen up to a full assurance of hope, or, are begotten again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them.

The second ground of this fear, is the mercy and goodness of God, who though he be thus powerful and just, yet he will not afflict, that is, **he will not afflict without mercy and tenderness to his people.**

Hence observe;

God is to be feared because he is so gracious and full of compassion, even while he doth afflict.

There is mercy with God not to afflict, that's sparing mercy, and therefore he is to be feared; there is mercy also with God in moderating our afflictions, that's sparing mercy too, and *therefore he is to be feared.* The graciousness of God manifested sometimes in sparing to afflict us, and often in afflicting us sparingly, should move us to fear him both greatly and alwayes: and if sparing mercy should move us to fear him, then much more should forgiving and pardoning mercy. When the Lord (*Exod. 34. 6, 7.*) *Passed by before Moses, and proclaimed, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, &c.* At this proclamation of grace, *Moses (vers. 8.) made haste, and bowed his head towards the earth and worshipped.* **How graceless then are they, who when they hear that God is gracious, merciful, and abundant in goodness, fear him not, but grow wanton and abuse his kindness!**

Now they who fear God, upon the due consideration, either of his power or goodness, find their hearts,

First, Much enlarged in the service of God, or in doing the work, and walking in the wayes of God (*Isa. 60. 5.*)

Secondly, This fear keeps their hearts to a close communion with God (*Jer. 32. 32.*) *I will put my fear in their heart, and they shall not depart from me.* We usually not only depart, but run from those whom we fear; but the true fear of God, Covenant-fear makes us cling about, and keep close to him,

N n n n 2

Third-

Thirdly, This fear keeps up good thoughts, and high estimations of God in the worst times, or when he is pleased to bring the greatest troubles upon us. An Israelite indeed, who *fearth the Lord and his goodness* (Hes. 3. 5.) will say (let God do what he will with him) *Truly God is good to Israel* (Psal. 73. 1.) Let us consider whether we have these effects of a gracious fear working in our hearts upon the remembrance both of the power and mercy of God. *Men do therefore fear him:*

He respecteth not any that are wise in heart.

These words (as was touched before) press the former duty of fearing God, inferred from the greatness and excellency of his power, judgment, justice, and mercy, yet further upon us. As if he had said, *Men do therefore fear him*; Why? Because, *He respecteth not any that are wise in heart*, that is, in general, he respects none who are so wise, or wise in such a way, as not to fear him upon those fore-mentioned grounds.

He respecteth not.

The word is, *seeth not*. There is an elegant paranomisie in this verse, the words which signifie to *fear* and to *respect* or *see*, being very near in sound. *God doth not see them with respect, who do not see him with fear*: *He seeth not any that are wise in heart*. It cannot be meant of the ordinary sight of the eye, that, *he seeth not the wise in heart*; God seeth clearly who they are: Nor can it be meant of the common apprehension of the mind, that, *he knoweth not the wise in heart*; God understands fully what they are; It must be meant then of a seeing with liking, or special approbation: God seeth not the wise in heart so, as to like or approve them. Our translation is full and clear to that sence, *He respecteth not*, or *he regardeth not any that are wise in heart*, that is, he takes no notice of them, they are not pleasing to him. Or thus, *He respecteth not any that are wise in heart*, that is, as they fear not him, so he is not afraid of them. *He respecteth not any that are*

Wise in heart,

Or, *wise of heart*. But some may say, Doth not God respect nor regard, doth not he take notice of those that are wise of heart? Whom

הֵאָרָא
Videre.
אֵרָא
Timere.

Whom then doth he respect or regard? of whom will he take notice, if not of the wise in heart? Hath the Lord any respect for fooles, for ignorant men, for ideots, for sorts? Surely men that are wise in heart, are not only very amiable but honourable in the eyes of God; Why then is it said, *He respecteth not any that are wise in heart?*

I answer, *The wise in heart*, are of two sorts.

First, there are some wise in heart, who are so only in their own opinion, in their own conceits or eyes; they have great thoughts of their own wisdom, and therefore as they are apt to despise men, so they are far from the fear of God. There is a wisdom in some men opposed to the fear of God, whereas true wisdom in any man is the beginning of that fear, as that fear is called the *beginning of wisdom* (Psal. 111. 10.) The vulgar Latine varieth the former part of the verse, yet renders this latter part by way of gloss, rather than translation, *They that seem to themselves to be wise*; and indeed the wise in heart, whom God respecteth not, are the proudly wise, the selfishly wise, such as are wise only in themselves and to themselves, such as have only that wisdom which the Apostle calleth, *the wisdom of the flesh*, or, *the carnal mind* (Rom. 8. 7.) *which is not subject to the Law of God, nor indeed (till mortified) can be*. He that is carnally wise disputes the commands of God, and takes the boldness to censure his works; such wise men God respecteth not, yea, they are under his greatest disrespect.

Secondly, Others are truly wise, graciously wise, wise for their souls, wise for heaven, wise for happiness, submitting their wisdom to the will of God, and doing his will: They that are thus wise in heart, the Lord respects, and highly respects; how can he do otherwise? seeing this is the character of God himself (Job. 9. 4.) *He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength*. And as God is wise in heart, so according to their line and measure, they that are godly, are wise in heart too. Therefore taking our translation, the wise in heart intended by *Elihu*, must needs be those that are only carnally wise, politicly wise, naturally wise, that is, wickedly wise, or at best vainly, or vain-gloriously wise.

Further, should we take the *wise in heart*, for those that are truly wise, graciously wise, yet it must be acknowledged, that even they may so mis-behave themselves, as to miss present respect from God.

And

And doubtless, *Elihu* observing that *Job* had spoken somewhat highly of himself, and did not carry it humbly enough under the hand of God (though his spirit was broken and brought down at last) checks him here, by telling him, *God respecteth not any that are wise in heart*, no not him, in that case and frame of spirit, as lifted up in his own wisdom.

Yea, Taking *wise in heart*, in this best sence, for the graciously wise, it is not for their wisdom and holiness that God respecteth or favoureth them. As he will not chastise them without cause, nor correct them but for their good; so when he doth them good or raiseth them up, when he sheweth them any favour, or giveth them any mercy, he doth it not for their wisdom-sake, or holiness-sake, but for his Sons-sake, or for his own Name-sake. *Alls of favour from God, are purely from his free grace, not from any defect in man*; so that every way his mercy is from himself, and undeserved by us. *He respecteth not any that are wise in heart.*

First, As the *wise in heart* stand in opposition to those that fear God, spoken of before, being so stout that they do not humble themselves in his fear,

Note;

True wisdom is alwayes joyned with the fear of God.

Yea, as *Job* concluded (*Chap. 28. 28.*) *The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil* (which none do but they who fear the Lord) *is understanding.*

Secondly, Note;

God regardeth no man for his wisdom, who doth not fear him.

Let men be never so learned and wise, never so prudent and politick, if they have not the true fear of God before their eyes, he values them nor, he will not cast an eye of favour upon them, they shall have no countenance with him, no honour from him. The most wise, the only wise God cares not for the wisest of men, who stand so much upon their own understanding, as to stout it out with him. He is not at all moved (unless to displeasure) by their wisdom, who are puffed up with a conceit of their wisdom.

Third-

Thirdly, When 'tis said, *He respecteth not any that are wise in heart,*

Note ;

Wisdom, without the fear of God, will do no man good at last, nor can it keep him off from evil.

Let no man think by his wisdom, policy, or subtilty, to keep himself out of the reach of God. If men will not fear and honour him, he knoweth well enough how to deal with them, and to recover his honour upon them.

Note Fourthly ;

Let men be as wise and crafty as they will, God is not afraid of them, as if they could do him any hurt, or spoil his designs, as if they could out-wit him, and over-throw his counsels.

Some take upon them, as if they by their wisdom could hinder Gods purposes, and counter-work him, as if they could over-reach or undermine him. We are much afraid of wise men ; If such a wise man, if such a *head-piece*, be against us, we think surely he will work us a great deal of mischeife. When *David* found his son *Absalom* rebelling against him, and *Achitophel* joyning with him, he prayed that God would turn his counsell into foolishness. (2 Sam. 15. 31.) *David* feared that *Achitophels* going over to *Absalom*, might have carryed the whole business against him : But God doth not regard a whole conclave of *Achitophels*, he cares not a straw for their plottings and contrivings. The Lord is so far from fearing the counsels of the wise in heart, that he can destroy them by their own wisdom, and not only undoe their counsels, but undoe them by their counsels : The pit which they have digged, they shall fall into it themselves, and be entangled in the lime-twiggs which they have set up for others. All this the holy Prophet intended when he said of God (Isa. 44. 25.) *He frustrateth the tokens of the lyers, and maketh the diviners mad : He turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish.* Diviners grow mad when they see things issuing quite contrary to their predictions and expectations. He that can destroy the wise with their own wisdom, needs not fear the wisdom of the wisest. 'Tis the noblest way of vanquishing an enemy, when we wound him with his own weapons, and turn his own Artillery upon him.

Thus

Thus God dealeth with the wise in heart; they are nothing in his hands, they cannot put the least stop to what he hath a purpose to do; but he can put a stop to all their purposes. *The foolishness of God* (saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 1. 25.) *is wiser than men.* He saith also in the third Chapter of the same Epistle (vers 19.) *The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God;* for it is written (and that writing is taken out of this Book of Job, Chap: 5. 13.) *He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.* And again, *The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vaine;* and vain he knoweth them to be in a twofold respect: First, because sinfull or evill in themselves; Secondly, because he knows how to make them barren or abortive, successles and ineffectual unto the wise: So that they all become like most Adventurers at a Lottery, going out with their hearts full of hopes, but returning with their hands full of blanks, Disappointment, Disappointment, being written upon all their counsels and undertakings.

Again, Taking *the wise in heart* for those who are truly wise, godly wise,

Learn, Fifthly;

God will not forbear, when he seeth cause to afflict those who are indeed the wisest and holiest of men.

Let no man think, that because he is wise or holy, he must not therefore be touched or medled with. Some conceive the chief design of writing this Book, was to let us see this truth, That let men be never so holy, never so upright, or godly, yet they must not claime priviledge from the crosse, nor complain when they are under it, that God deals not well with them. In this Job overacted, supposing there was no cause why such a man as he, should have such severe chastenings and rebukes; but let men be never so wise, never so good, God may see cause to lay his chastening rods upon them; and had the Lord nothing else to say for it, his sovereignty will bear him out in it against the best of men. The clay must neither say to the Potter, why hast thou made me so? nor why hast thou marr'd me so? *Be silent O all flesh (good as well as bad) before the Lord.*

Lastly,

Lastly, Observe ;

What-ever favour, what-ever mercy God bestoweth upon the heliest and wisest of men, he doth it not with respect to any wisdom, holiness, or goodness in them, but for his own Name sake, or because he will.

He respecteth not the wise in heart. No man can merit the least favour from God; his is free grace. All good cometh to us through the Son of his love, and it was meerly of his love, that ever his Son came to us and dyed for us. Therefore let us not say, such a one was a good man, such a one was an holy man, therefore it was so and so with him. As what we are or can do cannot oblige him (when he sees cause) from giving us correction, so he is un-obliged as to what we are or can do, in giving us salvation, whether temporal or eternal. *He respecteth not the wise in heart.*

There are yet two other readings of the words, which I shall set before the Reader, and then conclude all.

The word which we translate *respecteth*, signifying properly to see, some keep to that propriety of it, and render the text thus; *He seeth not all wise in heart*; that is, when the Lord looketh among the children of men, he doth not find many, yea scarce any of them wise. Thus the sense runs in connection with the former part of the verse, *Men should be so wise as to feare God, and not dispute any of his proceedings*; But he seeth or knoweth that all are not so; yea he findeth that a great many, even the most of men by much are very fools. The truth is, all men naturally are no better (*Psal. 14. 2.*) *The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God*; but he did not find one wise in heart among all the children of men, as Descendants from the first *Adam*. And when he cometh among the best of men, men of a second birth, the seed and descendants of the second *Adam*, he doth not see them so wise as to give him glory in every condition, nor under every dispensation, yea, he finds a great deal of folly in their hearts. Taking this sense of the words, *Elihu* seems here again to give *Job* a close rebuke, as not having behaved himself so wisely under his sufferings, as became a man professing the feare of God. 'Tis rare to find a man wise throughout,

O o o o

heart,

Is certe non invenit sapientes, quoscumque intuetur. Beza

heart, and ordering himself according to the rules of that wisdom, in all the turns and changes of his life.

Secondly, The latter part of the verse is translated thus; *Men, though never so wise in heart, cannot see him.* This reading runs the construction of the words quite another way: The former said, *He seeth not all wise in heart*; this saith, *Men wise in heart cannot see him.* The sence of which reading may be thus conceived; The wisest men cannot see God, he is both invisible and incomprehensible. As men cannot see him at all by sence, so neither can they comprehend him by reason; As the eye cannot take him in who is invisible, so neither can a finite understanding take him in, who is infinite in understanding. We have a sight of God through faith in this life: Thus *Moses saw him who is invisible* (Heb. 11. 27.) We see him here darkly, through a glass, the glass of his word and works, of his ordinances and providences (1 Cor. 13. 12.) But the clear sight of him *face to face*, the sight of him as he is, is reserved to hereafter (1 Cor. 13. 12. 1 John 3. 2.) These two latter readings of this latter part of the verse, hold out usefull truths for further meditation; but I adhere to our own as more clear in the original, as also more sutable to the scope and intendment of the foregoing discourse.

Elihu having said this, sits down and is silent, leaving *Job* to meditate upon and consider what he had said.

And now, no sooner had *Elihu* wound up his bottom, and made an end, but behold, God began and took *Job* in hand; he spake to him out of the whirlwind, at the beginning of the next Chapter, and brought him upon his knees before he had done with him, as will appeare further, if the patience of God give time and opportunity to go so far. To him be all the praise and glory, who hath helped thus far. *Amen.*

Non videbit
eum omnis sapi-
ens corde, vel
non v debunt
eum. sc: deum
omnes sapientes
corde. q. d. nul-
lus eorum ip-
sum videbit.
Drus:

A TABLE